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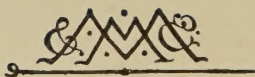
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TRUTH IN RELIGION



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TORONTO

TRUTH IN RELIGION

STUDIES IN THE NATURE OF
CHRISTIAN CERTAINTY

BY

DUGALD MACFADYEN, M.A.

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IN PIAM MEMORIAM
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JOHANNIS ALLISON MACFADYEN

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"Every nation, I suppose, was made by God and every man too! Only there are some nations, like some men, who know it, and some who do not. The great nations are they that have known it well; the small and contemptible both of men and nations are they that have either never known it, or soon forgotten it, and never laid it to heart."

CARLYLE.

PREFACE

THIS book aims at setting in relation to one another, two movements which threaten to divide Christian thought in England; but which together ought to issue in a great strengthening of its hold on the public mind. One is a movement towards the use of larger generalisations and wider categories in religious thought. It is largely in the hands of men trained in the methods of science who see that in the debate between science and religion, religion commands the fuller truth, and owns the larger categories. The other movement is towards more exact study and more careful definition of Christian experience; and clear vision of the historic facts on which that experience rests.

The line of reconciliation suggested is that the first movement may be welcomed as an expansion and enlargement of the truth on which all spiritual religion rests. The second movement is a definition of the exact contribution to religion which comes through Jesus Christ and creates the specific

Christian experience. The first movement emphasises the Incarnation, the second centres round the Atonement.

The first is cosmic in its range, rationalising in its method, and religious without being specifically Christian in its results. Its value is that by making men aware of spiritual relationships which permeate the universe, it is saving a whole generation from materialism. The second is personal and pragmatic in its method, directly ethical in its results, and offers a genuine interpretation of Apostolic Christianity. Each movement needs to understand the other, and for that purpose mutual definition is required. The outer circle of religious truth does not cut the inner circle of Christian experience.

I } The ground plan of the book may be briefly indicated. The first section is a frank attempt to deal with the supreme question of religion without using the dogmatic method. The dogmatic method has been used successfully, and may be used still in analysing and defining the contents of a particular historic religion, but it assumes much which our generation is not willing to grant. It is not discarded, but for the moment it is laid aside. These brief essays—consisting largely of notes written in trains and on the back of agenda papers in committee rooms—are meant

to suggest the historic and human basis for a religious outlook on life in which everything that belongs vitally to the nature and spirit of the Christian religion may find a place.

The first section traces the action of the consciousness of God in the race. Its object is to outline the categories which the religious mind brings to Jesus Christ, and is intended to suggest that His life, teaching, death, and rising again, are a final answer to perennial questions which the human spirit asks about life in its relation to God.

The conclusion of this section is that the universality and potency of religion finds its best explanation in the declaration of our Lord that the world is really a Kingdom of God; that in spite of all misunderstandings, rebellions, denials, confusions, blunders, and sins, God has been guiding men in all ages into a knowledge of himself which is destined to be full, adequate and authoritative for all the purposes of life.

The second section deals exclusively with the place and function which religion assigns to Jesus Christ. This is necessarily critical of any estimate which sets Him in any history or theory other than a history of religion. Its purpose is to point out that we must bring to the Person and Life of Christ the postulates which belong to the history of religion. We must deal with man as we find

him—as a being in whom the consciousness of God is a fact, in whose history that consciousness is a supreme factor, a being to whom sin is a reality, and in whose experience the knowledge of a Redeemer, and the experience of an upholding and perfecting Divine Life is one of life's chief necessities.

This book is the outcome of such quiet thinking and reading as can be combined with constant practical service in Church and home. Although some of the chapters have appeared separately, they now appear for the first time in their proper place, in a process of thought which has now extended over ten years. I am indebted to the Editor of the *Contemporary Review* for permission to reprint § 23, Pt. III., to the Editor of the *London Quarterly* for permission to reprint § 2, Pt. I., to Messrs. J. M. Dent & Co. for § 16, Pt. I., to Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton for permission to reprint my own contribution to the *Mansfield College Essays*, and to Principal Selbie of Mansfield College for reading all the proofs.

D. M.

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"When dealing with the Christianity of the first and second centuries we are dealing with an instructed and not magical Christianity--a Christianity of responsible persons." Prof. Ronald Harris.

PART I

THE HISTORICAL METHOD IN RELIGION

THE arrival of the historical method in the study of religion has conferred a measure of detachment on the student, and made it possible for him, without modifying his personal adhesion to one religion as uniquely true and personally authoritative, to study religion in a scientific spirit, both in its parts and as an organic whole. The historical method has added important departments to the area of religious study such as the psychology of religious development, higher criticism, comparative religion, evolution as a method of creation, and historico-criticism. The fact that each of them is absorbing in itself and requires a life-time for specialisation has, at least in part, prevented them from having their desired effect on the public mind. Occasionally specialists, pursuing a study regardless of any one else, bring

True | back results which have the effect of disintegrating belief, and which give an impression of destructive rather than constructive collaboration.

| There is, consequently, no greater need at the moment than that of continuous and careful collection of the constructive results of different spheres of religious study ; and for this purpose the comparative historical method has special fitness. Criticism must heal the wounds which criticism has made, and comparative criticism on the large scale of the world's history promises to remedy some of the confusions wrought by criticism on the minute scale of literature.

| The work of scholars, archaeologists, and literary critics is not in itself constructive, but it is the collection of material for construction. It is like the work of the coral insect in building a reef, where every inch of valid work is valuable and becomes the basis for something else ; but it is | not till the total result emerges into the sphere of | life and religious thought and action that its value | is seen. This is the stage at which we are now arriving. We are, consciously or unconsciously, greatly in need of an interpretation of life to which religion is a necessity instead of an otiose superfluity, and we can only get it by thorough,

informed, theological construction in the attitude and atmosphere of faith.

The opportunity of the moment is to carry a clear perception of the nature of truth in religion into the complexities of critical and historical study.

The new facts which have come to light in recent study bear on the question at the following points :—

1. New facts have come to scientific recognition as to the possibilities of human nature. Man—the religious subject—has been vindicating his claim to a spiritual nature, and establishing the validity of his spiritual experience.

2. The touch of nature which makes the world's religions kin has thrown into solitary and splendid eminence the unique function of the Christian religion, as the sole historic channel of our racial experience of a Redeeming God.

3. The relations between history and faith have been revised. Faith is less dependent on history, history more dependent for its meaning and interpretation on faith. Faith depends on history only for a true record of facts and relations which concern the object of faith. Religious history requires for its interpretation religious faith.

4. The place of dogma in Christianity is secure but secondary. It is not primary religious truth. It is a secondary product of religious experience, containing the analysis and organised statement of the content of that experience.

5. Religion, like other great developments, must be studied in all its manifestations if it is to be understood, and when we have done all it remains true that religion itself is larger, more true, more wonderful than any analysis of its contents, or study or statement of its meaning has ever shown it to be. It is as fundamental to the appreciation of life as physical birth.

§ 1.

Before the application of the scientific method to the study of religion, it was liable to a form of attack which was particularly difficult to meet. A mind trained in philosophy or science came to the study of religion furnished with the categories of philosophy or science. It put religion on its own particular bed of Procrustes, cutting off what exceeded and stretching out what fell short of its own particular standard. The student was a Hegelian or a Comtist, or a Spencerian, or a Darwinian before he came to the study of religion.

h.a. Gordon

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He should have been a Christian!

cf 'Christian Certainty and Inst. Proflexity'

P 92 - 4439

His mind was already full of the forms into which he was going to force his new study, and the result was not a new study of religion, but a new department of some philosophy—Hegelian or Darwinian, as the case might be.¹

The first task of the historical method was to liberate religion from this burden of subjection to many masters, tracing its history from the earliest records, and showing that, as a continuous human experience, it has its own sphere of reality to deal with, and is, like every other human experience, entitled to hypotheses, postulates, and categories of its own.

In its own sphere it is autonomous. The facts with which it deals belong to the deepest sphere of reality which comes within our knowledge. The assumption on which the study of religion proceeds is that the seat of feeling, consciousness, and will in man, is in conscious and growing relation to an unseen but ultimate Spiritual Reality, however imperfectly apprehended. The sphere of religion is man's conscious relation to God, God's positive

¹ About nine-tenths of the religious literature which has poured from the press in the last twenty-five years is vitiated by this defect. It is as if a majestic drama had been presented only in a series of flat photographs. "Die christliche Religion hat nichts der Philosophie zu thun. Sie ist ein mächtiges Brauen für sie, woran die gesunkene und leidende Menschheit von Zeit zu Zeit sich immer wieder emporgearbeitet hat; und indem man ihr diese Wirkung zugesteht, ist sie über aller Philosophie erhaben und bedarf von ihr keine Stütze." Goethe, 9. November 1808.

relation to man. This is a fact so central, fundamental, and predominant, that every orderly scheme of dealing with reality (Eucken's word is syntagma¹) must take stock of it. It is a fact for metaphysics, though metaphysics has no categories large enough to hold all its meaning. It is a fact for philosophy, though philosophy stops short at the threshold where religion begins. It is a fact for science, though it overleaps the scientific categories in a hundred directions. It may be approached from the side of aesthetics, but for adequate statement it must be allowed to supply categories and postulates from its own history.

The history of a religion begins when a conscious personal relation between God and man arises, and valid criticism must keep within the recognition of the reality of the two terms of the relation. Any system of thought which denies to God power to reveal His character and will, or denies

¹ A "syntagma" is a systematised organisation of life, not a mere organisation of theory. Eucken uses the word to mean "world forces rooted in definite historical movements," each of them arriving at a thorough reconstruction of life in the light of some simple specific conviction. The syntagma of religion is the history of the race and of every individual seen in relation to God. See Note D., Rudolf Eucken on Religion and History, p. 288.

to man the ability to know the leading and guidance of God, to obey or disobey the Divine will, falls over the boundary line between religion and philosophy. If God be not recognised as at least personal, if He has no will and no power to accomplish what He wills, if He cannot reveal Himself in human history, or inspire religious personalities, religion in the proper sense ceases to be possible.

It is indeed singular that writers who are clearly anxious to find a certain knowledge of God mediated in nature should not recognise that a much fuller and more adequate knowledge of God is mediated in history. The revelation of God in nature is revelation through a so-called material order of being ; and it is clearly illogical to affirm that God, who can reveal Himself in the so-called material order, cannot reveal Himself in a moral order, making use of the much higher orders of powers which meet in human nature and find expression in human history. The claim for a historical revelation is strictly reasonable. The basis of the claim that we have the history of a special revelation is the fact of universal revelation, and that rests historically on the experience of the race. Man has always claimed that he has

received help in the task of living, from powers supernatural and spiritual. The help thus derived has touched all sides of his nature—physical, mental, moral, spiritual. It has appealed to his whole personality, so as to justify him in believing that in the great adventure of life he is dealing with a Power as fully personal as himself.

An adequate religion cannot, therefore, be made independent of historic fact, for history is one of the channels by which the knowledge of God is mediated to us. We have the right to use, assess, value, employ, and perpetuate whatever in history really serves this supreme purpose. On the other hand, criticism of historic fact does not touch the foundations of religion, for religion itself cannot rest on facts which essentially get their meaning and interpretation from religion. The bedrock of certainty is experience, and the experience of the consciousness of God, of inspiration through revelation, of sin and forgiveness, of religious peace, hope, and victory, are among the most widely verified and securely attested experiences of mankind. They are at least as surely attested as any experiences which come through sight and taste, touch and smell; and to many they have a far higher order of verity.

§ 2.

How far is faith dependent on history? Must the matter of faith be historically mediated for us? Can we emancipate religion from history and treat it purely as a science of spiritual laws? These are the questions of the twentieth century just as the relations of religion and science raised the questions of the nineteenth.

The view that essential religion should be universal, self-evident, mediated inwardly not historically with complete certitude to the individual, through his own reason and conscience, was the standpoint of eighteenth century deism. It shows a tendency to revive to-day. It is the logical correlate of what is called intellectualism in religion. It assumes that knowledge, not faith, is the fundamental thing. As in mediaeval scholasticism, reason is called in to defend the faith; but soon claims the right to define the faith it has come to defend. Reason next becomes master instead of servant, and offers to determine the length, breadth, height and depth of faith.

Many lines of thought converge to make the question of the relation of faith to history in

religion the question of the coming century, as the relation of faith to science was the question of the last. Note the converging lines—the ecclesiastic, the theologian, and the exegete have all appealed to history. Church theories have loosened their grip as historians have shown a stage of organisation which produced one theory, passing into a stage which produced another. The foreign missionary has found in the development of modern churches that the primitive stages tend to recur. Dogmas have been analysed, tracked to their origin, watched in their growth, and attention has been diverted from what they affirm to the causes that produced them, and the spiritual instincts expressed in them. In the interpretation of the New Testament fresh valid material has come from historians and archaeologists like Sir William Ramsay and Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt. New Testament Greek has been recovered as a spoken language. S. Paul's history has been rewritten in the light of a rediscovered Asia Minor ; and the apocalyptic passages in the New Testament, which have been like a surd in the minds of thoughtful people for years, have come back to us with new meaning under the magic of an historical interpretation. These results have all followed from the use of one method—the

historical. As applied to religion the historical method means acceptance of principles which give us (1) the valuation of fact above theory ; (2) literary criticism ; (3) historical construction, or the process of following a belief or dogma through all its stages to its conclusion, and criticising it by the standard supplied by its own principles ; and (4) scientific comparison. Or, using the war names under which these principles commonly parade, higher criticism, evolution as a method of revelation as well as of creation, religious psychology and comparative religion. The application of these principles has produced a body of students who approach the study of religion in a new temper, which may be broadly described as having for its main features these points of view. According to this school—

(1) The true aim of the study of religion is no longer abstract authoritative truth : it is to discover what churches and peoples have believed and experienced in the sphere of man's relation to God ; what they aimed at, what they found, and why they found it. Nothing endures, says one writer, as a possible foundation for doctrinal construction save observation and experience (Professor P. Gardner, *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1902).

(2) It is not enough to agree upon the creed of one particular time, generation, or church; contemporary facts must be set beside other similar facts in other times, generations, churches, and religions. The study of religion must be not only historical, but comparative and scientific.

(3) All the peoples about whom we can learn anything on the religious side of their history have a claim to be studied, but especially those ancient peoples whose history lies before us complete. Doctrine, ritual, and polity in each religion are to be traced back to their roots in personal experience, for all products of religion are found on branches of the tree of life.

(4) It is no longer possible to characterise whole institutions like monasticism, or oecumenical councils, or creeds like the Athanasian, or Nonconformist denominations, by dogmatic adjectives. All of them have had some right to exist. Most of them were good to begin with, some have gone on improving, others were necessary temporary expedients which only became bad because they were perpetuated. The same institution may have to be classed as salutary or detrimental according to the stage of its development. It is the task of the historian to show with perfect impartiality why

what was once reasonable and right became wrong and mischievous.

(5) The effect of this method is that dogma is removed from the sphere of absolute into that of relative truth. It is true for the experience of the time which formulates it, but not therefore for all time. Its logical issue in conduct may have proved its condemnation, as *e.g.* the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation, which had a strong New Testament basis, but has now fallen out of belief because its ethical results are bad. Truth in religion is no longer abstract and absolute, but personal, practical, experimental.

On the other hand, the very rapidity and success of historical research has produced a reaction due to the feeling of insecurity. It is, say some, like living in a district which is being undermined. They never know when next the ground is going to give under their feet. They would like to feel sure that the objective occurrence of the facts of the gospel-history is not a necessary condition of Christian belief or morality. These, they say, are beyond the reach of textual criticism and historical research. They belong to the permanent laws of nature and the universe, like gravitation and the circulation of the blood. "It is not easy to show,"

says Dr. Inge, "how an event or a series of events in the past can affect the truth of a religion. Either these events form part of the regular series of occurrences in time, or they do not. If they do they are only particular manifestations of laws, which are always in operation, and which vindicate themselves continually in human experience. In that case the veracity of the historian does not matter much because the event is repeated. If, on the other hand, the event is wholly miraculous and solitary, its importance is in inverse ratio to its strangeness." This is an ingenious attempt "to put the ark of the Lord somewhere where the Philistines cannot get at it." The facts in this case are merely symbols of eternal and spiritual truths. What matters is not the facts, but the truths. The weak point of this method is that in effect it surrenders Christianity in order to defend religion as a valid phase of human experience. It dissipates the personal revelation of God into a communication of abstract truths. It sacrifices the redemptive to the didactic element in religion. It tries to save religion by surrendering Jesus Christ as necessary for mediating the experience of God to man. It is not clear whether those who adopt

this method have seen how much they surrender before the Philistines come to their line of defence. Dr. Inge is in pleasant company with Emerson and the New Englanders, and there are many interesting possibilities to be explored in that direction; but the central interest in the Christian religion is Jesus Christ, and a line of defence which does not include Him has no permanent Christian interest.

The Abbé Loisy made a valiant attempt to combine an extreme critical treatment of the Christian documents with an *ex animo* acceptance of the whole cycle of Roman Catholic dogma. He bridged the chasm left by rejecting the sacred record, with a doctrine of development which was like a suspension bridge with only one pillar to hang on. It was clear that in Roman dogma authenticated by the Pope he had one pillar, but where the other was no one could see. A similar criticism would have to be made of a recent effort in the Free Churches to evolve a dogmatic system from the characteristic Christian experience, after the most extreme conclusions of the critics against the Old and New Testaments have been admitted. A doctrinal reconstruction which neglects to square accounts with the whole historical and scientific

movement of our time cannot be said to rest on a secure basis.

A position of great interest and present popularity makes spiritual need a criterion of religious truth. Whatever proves its value to the soul has a right to exist and live on in the cycle of religious truths. This is a system of Christian doctrine built on what are technically described as "value-judgments," the soul's verdicts, that is, of the worth of religious beliefs to its own life. Whether the belief has any relation to objective truth we cannot know, and therefore we need not care. We are only concerned with the question whether it does its work. If it works effectively it may be assumed to be in harmony with the construction of the universe. The position of the Ritschlians is, indeed, liable to abuse; for they can accept theological dogmas and expound them freely, though they recognise in them only a psychological validity. The main position that spiritual need, and not harmony with objective fact, is the test of religious truth, is the position taken by Father Tyrrell in his *Lex Orandi* and *Lex Credendi*. It has in its favour the truth that religious ideals, like all other ideals, must ultimately be tested by their effects. "By their fruits ye shall know them." In

a rational universe it is certainly a strong argument for the truth of a religious conception if it brings peace, harmony, strength, and power into a human life. Ritschlianism is a serviceable half-way house for wayfarers whose means of conveyance have broken down, and who cannot get any further on the road to faith. But it is a half-way house at best, and cannot be seriously regarded as affording more than a lodging for the passing night of doubt. It has at least done the great service of rescuing the ark of the Lord from its sojourn in the temple of Hegel and the monists. It has vindicated those who maintained that neither the Hegelian philosophy nor any other could be set up, and made the arbiter of the truth of New Testament facts or the validity of the New Testament faith. Ritschlianism has been of service in this country as a reasoned position genuinely religious, and therefore holding back the encroachments of rationalism among thoughtful people in the churches. But its value has been in keeping us in touch with the historic faith. We shall be more at home when faith and history are still more closely and permanently linked together.

These positions have been stated critically and comparatively because none of them seem to fill

the requirements of a position, catholic in the sense of being true to historic Christianity, and evangelical in the sense of being true to New Testament emphasis and Christian experience. On these positions, which all have their hold on the public mind, three comments may be made.

(1) Faith has, in its own right, authority to set some limits to the historian's operations. It has ascertained by experience some absolute and final spiritual values. It has now to estimate the values of the historians' work for its own purposes, and act on the basis of that valuation.

The edifice of faith rests on two pillars. One is supplied by experience, the other must be given by history. Critics having weakened the historic pillar, it is right that they should rebuild it, taking as its basis revelation, not in the sphere of a nation's, but in the sphere of a world's, history; not religion in Israel alone, but religion in mankind. We have had history used to undermine faith, and we have had faith criticising and defying historical study. The future belongs to those who can see that history is the mightiest of all the instruments in the hands of faith, that it is only half understood till we find God in it, and that God

is less than half unveiled till we find Him in history. Faith and history are not rivals, for if history is needed to mediate the content of faith, faith is needed to assess the religious values of history. They are fellow-workers in the great task of supplying our time with a genuine religious interpretation of life. From this standpoint we may look to the historical method to bring out (1) the *differentia* of religion, which distinguish it from other parts of human experience ; and (2) the *differentia* of Christianity among the religions of the world.

(2) The competing claims of intellectualism and historic Christianity may be partly reconciled by differentiating between the functions of religion in general, and Christianity in particular. Religion deals with the whole life of man, and all the relations of that life to God. There is certainly a large element of intuition, spiritual perception, incursions from the unseen, the sense and perception of the inward light, in those relations. Intellectualism finds its sphere in co-ordinating these spiritual feelings and perceptions.

The function of religious personalities is to mediate to us spiritual truths and powers, that is, to interpret these into the terms of human character

and life. Jesus Christ mediates to the world, and in this He is absolutely alone, the divine forgiveness of sin. We do not know what that means apart from Him. Only a sinless personality is reliable as a witness to God's forgiveness of sin.

It is still impossible to show what is meant by the love of a Father-God or to deal adequately with the consciousness of sin in man, except through the historic redemption wrought in Jesus Christ. Christianity is the revelation of God's redemptive character and action in history.

The safeguard against the pale ghost of a religion which figures at suburban coteries playing at religious inquiry, lies in holding fast by the historic Person who mediates to us a God in closest and deepest sympathy with the life of his children, healing their diseases, bearing their sorrows, redeeming them from their sins.

It is only by retaining the historical element in religion in this sense that we can keep the whole ethical and redemptive power of the Gospel. Intellectualism can give us theistic theory. Mysticism can find an emotional rest in the intuitive perception of a spiritual God. A generous historic interpretation of the function of religion will not deny the place of any of

these. It may find room for God's touch with the soul in nature mysticism, practical mysticism, and devotional mysticism, but it will go on to make clear that none of these give an adequate account of the Christian faith. It is an essential element in that faith that the God in whom we believe is known to the world through a Person in whom the redeeming purpose and will of the Eternal have entered into the world's history and shaped it. In Him God is adequately known. He is not only the world's creator but also the regenerator of its life, beginning a new race with a new Adam, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

(3) Certain recent inquiries into the nature of religious faith class it psychologically with aesthetic and moral ideals as a function of the soul.

The proper analogue of religious truth is not scientific truth, but the aesthetic and moral ideals; that is to say, faith is a conviction which the religious man brings to all the circumstances and events of life, an ideal which our spiritual nature summons us to impress on the raw material of human life. It is a conviction that in life and its experiences we are dealing not merely with

things impersonal but with a Supreme Person, and that all things may and can be seen in relation to Him. In reasoning we bring a logical ideal to regulate thought. In art the test of the artist is that he brings to nature an aesthetic ideal which reveals beauties of form and colour which but for his vision would never have been seen.

The moral reformer sees not only what is but what ought to be, and he is inwardly convinced that what ought to be has a higher right to exist than what is. His task is to impress his ideal on the facts. To this order belong the ideals and forces of religion. They are mighty inward convictions not derived from life but fashioning it. They are creative and redeeming powers. They enlarge the imagination, re-enforce the will, make the spirit sensitive and strong. They seek to make life after a pattern seen on the Mount, or a new creation envisaged in Christ Jesus. The Christian man cannot leave anything outside the synthesis which for him holds life together, otherwise life is incompletely hallowed. The world is for him the home of spirits, temporarily clothed with bodies. They are all in potential or actual relation to the Father of our spirits, who reveals Himself at sundry times and in divers manners,

and especially for the guidance and help of His children. So far as men share His nature they will be and act like Him. This being the nature of faith it is bound to react on life according to its own nature. Its verification is in its effects. History is the great laboratory where faith is tested. As the evidence of the artistic impulse and the aesthetic ideal is the picture painted by the artist, so the evidence of faith is the personal and national history which it makes. The supreme argument for faith is not a Butler's analogy, nor a body of divinity, nor a philosophy of religion, but an Old Testament containing the record of a divinely-led people, or a New Testament containing four portraits of a redeeming life.

§ 3.

The method of comparative religion is to observe and collect the facts about specific religions. When the facts have been collected, they are then compared and classified, similarities and differences are noted between religions in all parts of the world. It is first an objective study. One of the notable results of this method is the discovery that religions in all parts of the world have many striking similarities.

Sacrifice
&
prayer

Religious ceremonies link together places as wide apart as the Torres Straits and Alaska. The endeavour to propitiate by sacrifice is found in almost every country of the world. Prayer is practically universal, though its meaning naturally varies with the character of the Being to whom it is addressed. Allowing for wide variations caused by religious personalities, these facts suggest that in religion, as in other matters, there is a touch of nature which makes the whole world kin.

The science of comparative religion, as a science of observation and comparison, is valuable and interesting for its collection and comparison of masses of facts; but the meaning and interpretation of the facts, and the theories which explain them, are still a matter of discussion among experts. Even its most learned exponents frankly note their own changes of opinion.¹ As yet many of its results have been disappointingly superficial, dealing chiefly with external similarities of ritual and worship rather than essential relationships between man and God. This is, no doubt, because as yet the science has not come to maturity, and those who use the critico-historical

¹ Fraser, cf. *Totemism and Exogamy* with *The Golden Bough*.

method are only beginning to feel confidence in its value.

The method of comparative religious study will not do its best work till it comes to deal, not merely with ideas or customs, but with the essential factors in religion. Whatever is vital in religion belongs either to a stage in the history of the revelation of God, or to a stage in the history of the religious aspiration and endeavour of man. Nothing short of this is adequate to account for all the facts. Whatever finds a permanent place in a religion is not to be classed as an accident, but as a stage in an absolute process which has for its end God's revelation of Himself to man, and man's full and sufficient knowledge of God.

Of course, as in other histories, process is not all progress. A religious development goes forward, then suffers a reaction; then the next step forward outbids the reaction. There are movements sometimes occupying a century of history which seem to carry a religion out of its true line of development. Then comes a recurrence to its primitive ideas, and a new start is made. In this history we must sometimes treat a hundred years as one day.

History suggests that a conviction of absolute

worth is necessary to keep a religion alive. The history of religion can only be understood if it is recognised that to the experiencing subject the religious relation is the most commanding of all realities. The habit of rendering religion into the terms of some other order of thought—philosophical, political, scientific, or, after the latest fashion, hygienic, does not in the end serve religion. It leads ultimately to the substitution of these lower values for the higher. If a religion dare not claim to be absolute, it soon ceases to be authoritative even to those who accept it. Relative religious truth would never have accomplished any of the achievements, either good or evil, which stand to the credit of religion in the history of the world.

Religion must be authoritative if it is either to evangelise or control the world. This is why the first of all prayers hallows the name of God. It is all-important that the worshipper's thought of God should be worthy, true, holy, gracious, and as perfect as possible. A nation is never better than its God. If it has enshrined cruelty, or lust, or caprice, in its holy place, these will be permanently entrenched in the life of its people. Even when people have learned to think of God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

they may fall far below the ideals they worship. But at least a true religion must have a perfect God.

The method of comparison and contrast between religions living and dead has in it the promise of a great and rapid expansion of religious life and interest, when the public mind is awakened by this process to understand what religious development is, and what is meant by religious progress.

Religions are reckoned powerful when they manifestly control the life of a people. They are weak when they are chiefly in the hands of priests. The strongest religions are those which have the surest hold on the family and the home, where children are early trained in the habits, duties, and ideals of the religion of their fathers. Education, and particularly the religious education of women, is one of the most important religious interests. Literature is a great pioneer in giving permanence and force to the higher elements in religion. A sacred book has repeatedly saved a religion from degradation by giving birth to a revival, moral, spiritual, or intellectual. When a new movement has interpreted the sacred book in its own way, it has permanently vindicated its place in the religion in which it has arisen. But *the permanent power in*

making a religion progressive is the continuous operation of the Spirit which originally caused religion to spring into being in the heart of man. When that spirit is not allowed freedom to operate, nothing can keep religion alive. Wherever it is recognised that "God has yet more light and truth to break forth from His word," and men hold themselves ready for the willing reception of the light, obeying the Word when it finds them, religion continues to conquer new provinces of life. Ultimately, all religions tend to live or die in proportion to their influence for good or evil in the characters of the men and women they influence.

A religion may decay even while it is apparently extending. It is injured by ostentation, by secular privilege, by living in the public gaze, and by the pursuit of political power. It is easy to fill the world with religion, if at the same time you empty religion of its moral content. Multitudes may be got to wear a ribbon or attend a ceremony. But the meaning of the spiritual content of a true religion dawns slowly on the soul.

A religion is dying when it is condemned by the moral sense of the community. Thus Islam is now being agitated from within by the fact that young Moslems who have come into contact with

Western morals have discovered that Mohammed was not a good man, judged by their ethical standards. Christianity is decadent when it deals with mint, anise, and cummin, and grows indifferent to justice, mercy, and truth. It is powerless in proportion as it deals with customs instead of character, dogmas instead of life, proprieties instead of love, and traditions instead of the powers that create character and sustain the spirit of man.

§ 4.

Comparative religion supplies the student with a number of terms and ideas belonging to the history of the relations of God and man as they have been conceived from time to time, such as priest, prophet, saint, apostle, Son of God, sin, sacrifice, atonement, holiness, a Saviour, the experience of salvation, a society of the saved, redemption, justification with God, sanctity, illumination, union with God, rules of initiation and communion, inspiration, revelation, sacred scriptures, preparation for a future life, immortality.

Ideas of this order are the categories of religion ; they supply broad classifications into which the practices and ideas of religion tend to fall. Any useful contribution to religious progress or re-

ligious criticism must deal with these or similar categories, implying a relationship between man and God. A criticism which starts from a standpoint outside religion damages the critic more than the religion. The historic claim for Jesus Christ is that all the categories of religion reach their final and perfect fulfilment in Him. In Him the religious history of the world is crowned and consummated. The history of Revelation, wherever it begins, leads up to Jesus Christ, and in Him reaches its acme. He is the final, because the perfect revelation of God to men.

Islam is a religion which begins with a prophet. The essential idea of prophecy is inspiration, *i.e.* the inbreathing of the spirit of God. The fact of inspiration is widespread, and its degrees are many; but when we seek for the perfect illustration of inspiration, we find it in the words and life of Jesus Christ.

Sacrifice is all but universal. It is almost an instinctive way of approaching God, and witnesses to the feeling of the worshipper that some atonement must be made for those things of which his conscience is afraid. In Jesus Christ sacrifice reaches its final and complete expression. He is the sacrifice that ends all sacrifices.

“Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith : ‘ *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare for me ; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure.* Then said I, *Lo, I am come* (in the roll of the book it is written of me) *to do thy will, O God*’ ” (Heb. x. 5, 6, 7). The “one true, pure, and perfect sacrifice” is the sacrifice of a Son’s surrendered will to the requirements of the Father’s holy will, and that sacrifice (which no man could make perfectly of himself) is God’s gift to the world in Jesus Christ.

Prayer is in some form almost as universal as religion ; but if we follow it round the world, we find it reaching its finished and ideal form in the prayer which our Lord taught His disciples,—“Our Father which art in heaven.”

We may take a conception like the *Buddha* from the East, where it stands for an ideal of the saintly life. When the Buddhist comes to know Jesus Christ he finds his ideal fulfilled in Christianity. An old Buddhist who had become a Christian gave as his dying message to his friends, “Tell them that *Jesus Christ* is the only *Buddha* in whom men should believe.”

When religion is treated as a great factor in the life of the races of mankind, linking them by its

solidarity, a process goes on which may be called the export and import of religious ideas and practices. Thus the presence of Christian missions in India has already done something towards introducing Christian ideas and ideals into the religions of India. It is, perhaps, more really influential in this way than through its direct converts. Not only in eclectic societies like the Brahmo Somaj, but in a much wider area, the leaven of Christian ethics and the Christian spirit is at work. China, which lagged so long behind, now bids fair to overtake India in the march towards the light. All such progress makes a new avenue of approach for the missionary. Just as S. Paul regarded the Hebrew religion as a school-master to bring the Israelite to Christ, so the modern missionary may look upon the long centuries of Hindoo and Chinese religious training as centuries of schooling meant at last to bring men to Christ. The old missionary was taught to denounce the religion of the people he came to evangelise. The modern missionary knows that it is his first business to understand that religion. He will then welcome in it everything that is akin to Christianity, enthusiastically claiming the kinship, and urging it as the basis of his claim for attention

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to the historic Jesus of Nazareth, in whom all the experiences of religion are realised, and their meaning interpreted.

It is clear also that the stimulating process is not to be all on one side. Our own minds will be opened to many things in the New Testament by the study of other religions. Indeed, it may happen that in the providence of God, the correctives to modern materialism and to ecclesiastical divisions may come to us along this line. There is no form of faith or practice of religion in any part of the world, from which English Christianity has not something to learn.

The religious practice of an initiation ceremony has kept tribal religion alive among remote tribes in the Australian backwoods; and on that matter every Christian Church has something to learn from such tribes. The old-fashioned Baptists with their custom of public riverside baptism, have alone retained in its full impressiveness the original Christian initiation ceremony.

Totemism is a very elementary religious type, yet it witnesses radically to a feeling of kinship with nature which is a normal experience of religious development, and ought not to be ignored in conceiving an ideal religious type.

Hero-worship takes many forms in different parts of the world, but they all enforce the value of teaching, perhaps dramatising, the great Christian biographies. It is certain that an immense enrichment of life may come to us along these channels.

Fetishism may at least mark a danger spot in the development of religion, and stand as evidence that a religion which imputes spiritual power to things seen, easily falls away into superstition.

Islam has many grave defects judged from the standard of a perfect religious type, but it at least secures the sobriety of its adherents, for every faithful Moslem is an abstainer. When the faiths meet in practical comparison, as they do in many parts of the East, it is not creditable to English Christianity that alcohol is safer in the keeping of a Moslem than of a Christian regiment.

Hindooism, with all its grave and in some respects horrible defects, can teach the world how to hold a vast people for a national religion. It has secured its mastery over the people of India by its hold on the homes of the people, where the regular visits of the Brahmin, the performance of his ritual, the constant retelling of the stories of his

religion, form the mind of the child almost before the child has begun to be aware of it.

We do not know the strong or the weak points of our own religion until we have compared it with another. There would be less hesitation about the Christian faith and practice, and less uncertainty about the unique supremacy of Jesus Christ, if we were more in the habit of putting our religion side by side with others in order to bring out its points of special worth.

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The history of religion in our land is the record of a long historical development. We cannot separate any part of it, any belief or practice, wholly from that development. It is hardly possible, while we are in the midst of this historical process, to stand sufficiently outside it to see our own place in it; but we get much help from the study of the growth, expansion, decay, revivals, debasements and developments of other religions, such as Buddhism or Hindooism. We can also see that in many directions the full development of religion has still to be accomplished. Every religious category has a history, and the record of its development has to be carried to its completion. Even when it is already fully ours in statement or ideal it has still to capture and form

the raw material of human life. When we know the ideal of the saint we have still to explore experimentally the resources of sanctity.

Estimating religion by its ideal we can see that a true religion would provide within its terms a relation between God and man, both conceived as fully personal, both free to do whatever is in accordance with their nature, and each capable of being influenced by the act and penetrated by the character of the other.

This relation would include, on the side of God, power to make Himself known and loved, to reveal Himself, to inspire man by the knowledge of Himself, and to assist him in the whole course of human life by guidance, moral quickening, or spiritual relief.

Using "salvation" as the term for the specific benefit which religion has to offer, the salvation offered by an ideal religion must clearly be adequate to the needs of human life. It must be the seal of ethical perfection. The saved life should be a complete, lovable, fruitful type of sainthood. In the broad judgment of humanity religion is always insecure unless its fruits commend themselves to the general conscience.

Religion should offer the consecration of the

higher and spiritual side of human nature by hallowing the whole of the moral life, and by making life an open communion with God. It must find room among the operations of the Spirit of God for impulses like the love of beauty, of dignity in worship, the passion for truth and justice. It will recognise the immanence of God in Nature all the more when it has recognised the moral transcendence of God in personality. It must hold the moral and spiritual powers in man in their place of dominion through the disturbance of sex, regulate the relations of men in social fellowship, make egotism a disgrace and altruism an honour, consecrate to the individual his place in the family, the nation, and the race, and enlist him in the co-operative movement of human brotherhood; and it must do this, appealing only to internal motives, opening out the paths of duty as leadings of the Spirit of God.

On the human side the religious relation postulates freedom of spiritual access to God. One of its functions is to open to men comfort, strength, guidance, encouragement in the whole task of life. It will interpret and explain to men the meaning of those mystic experiences and visitations of the Spirit which, though they come as

they list, are sufficiently regular to create a recognised type—the mystics. For both functions access to God must be free, simple, personal. Religion loses one element of vitality if it cease to recognise that “the spirit bloweth where it listeth.” It is injured by everything which makes it the special privilege of a caste. It is disturbed when undue emphasis falls on the exact observance of a ritual of any kind.

Prayer Prayer is the supreme reality. It must be experienced as a real approach to God, and recognised as having positive effect on the relation of God to man. It is essentially the channel by which the help which religion offers enters into life.

A world-religion must recognise the mediating function of religious personality. If God be conceived as the home of all moral and spiritual powers and forces, personality is clearly the medium through which these forces get entrance into human history. The pivots of history are its religious heroes. Personality stands like a Matter-horn, with its head in the clouds and its feet in the valleys, the cloud-clad head collecting the fresh waters which fertilise the valleys at its foot. Personality runs through all the phases of being,

communicating with the Spirit supreme, and acting as the channel for all ideals and influences that carry inspiration, order, movement, moral cleansing, and spiritual helpfulness into the history of the race.

Religious personalities mediate God to the world, but they do not all mediate the same powers or truths. The eye may be trained to see in a personality what particular spiritual power or grace he mediates. There is something specially repellent in the attempt made by many modern writers to deal with religious personalities as a horse-dealer deals with horses, estimating one against another in the terms of their height from the ground. Every genuine religious personality is a special, solitary, and original gift of God to the world. But they do not all mediate things equally vital and important. Their value appears when we ask ourselves about religious personalities, "What enters human history through this person?" Then Jesus Christ takes His unique and solitary pre-eminence. We find in Him a Son with a full knowledge of a Father-God, a sinless person proclaiming the forgiveness of sin, a King of conscience creating a kingdom of conscience, an immortal personality guaranteeing immortality.

§ 5.

The ideas which determine the position of Jesus Christ in religion lie beyond the frontiers of historical discussions, in the religious mind of man. They can, like all other great things, neither be proved nor disproved; they are postulates of human history. Religion has emerged under modern handiwork as a great fundamental human experience, dealing in all peoples with such subjects as creation, revelation, sin, sacrifice, atonement, the hope of a Saviour, the experience of salvation, the creation of a society of the saved, rules of initiation and communion, inspiration, sacred writings, and the preparation for a future life. These are real, permanent, universal human interests. They are the things men want to know about, and Jesus Christ belongs to their history in the world as much as Charlemagne belonged to the history of the Holy Roman Empire. He is first and foremost a fact in religion, and He is not rightly approached except with the categories of religion already in the mind.

The fact of Christ belongs not only to the history of man, but fundamentally to a history of religion; and not only to the history of religion in

cf. Pilgrim Church. p. 49

Israel, for the history of religion in Israel is part of a much larger history of religion in mankind. So that before the historian has the right to touch the history of Jesus Christ, he must show his passport to deal with a question so vital, universal, and essential to the life of man as religion. Once this fundamental question is raised we clear away the *débris* of many unsound estimates of the worth and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus does not offer himself historically as a character : He offers Himself in history as a Saviour, or, more completely, what we know of Him as a character is that He has consistently throughout the character of a Saviour.¹ Criticism of His teaching as incomplete, or of His ethics as insufficient, is irrelevant. His teaching had the same object as His life and death. He offers His teaching as a means of saving men from sin. It is as an offer of salvation that His life, teaching, death, and rising, claim to be God-given. The test of such an offer is not supplied by criticising from a non-religious standpoint the Person

¹ Cf. Deissman, *Light from the Ancient East*. "In its early days, Christianity made conquest of hearts not because it was a 'religion of redemption,' as people are fond of saying now-a-days, substituting the impersonal for the personal, but because it was the cult of a Redeemer" (p. 397).

who makes it, but by accepting it, and so testing its validity.

igion is estimated to guide.
The critical questions which comparative religion asks about a religious personality are such as these :

What is his relation to God and the supernatural ? Is that relation the most perfect that can be conceived ? Is it final ? Does it provide us with a perfect channel for the worship of a perfect God ? Is his conception of God adequate to the sovereignty and salvation of such a world as this ? Are we set through Him in fellowship with a rational and credible Supernatural worthy of all reverence and trust ?

What is the bearing of his religion on conduct ? Does the Founder give us an ideal morality and himself exhibit it ? How will his religion affect the family, the state, the nation, and the world ?

What is the connection between religion and morality in his system ? Does his religion offer salvation from sin, its guilt, and spiritual consequences ? Does it control and harmonise personal and social life ? Are the religion and its morality separable ? If so they will be divorced in practice, but a perfect religion must be united with a satisfying morality to hold men permanently.

What does his religion teach about the future

life? Is it equally true to mercy and judgment, the demands of the conscience and the heart?

The time has come when Christianity can only gain its proper place in the life of men, churches and races, by being seen in relation to the total religious experience of the race. Jesus Christ is not a hero among heroes, a philosopher among philosophers, or an ethical teacher among ethical teachers. He is these and more, because He transcends them all. He is the centre and key of all the religions of the world;—

God has other words for other worlds,
But for this world, the word of God is Christ.

§ 6.

Of the possible tests of religion the simplest is the test by its fruits. Much that is essential in religion cannot be tested by any experimental test. It deals with the supernatural. It rests on supernatural sanctions. The expectations to which it ministers lie beyond the range of this present life. It requires an eternity to work out its meaning;—

On earth the broken arc,
In Heaven the perfect round.

But much also may be submitted to test. Of this part it is said “by their fruits ye shall know

them"—and at a time when the popular mind is increasingly practical, the tendency is to measure religions in this way. What does it make of life? What does it make of man? If I become an adherent of this faith or that, what will it make of me? What is its effect on character? On the family? On society? On the state? Is it disruptive or constructive? Is it a help and inspiration of life, or a fetter? Is it indeed a fresh and great form of *truth*, or a convention, a tradition, a creed, a habit, out of which we are growing.

Truth in religion (1) may mean historic truth—correspondence between word and fact, as *e.g.* in the case of the Gospels, the truth of the report means correspondence of the record with events which actually happened. (2) Dealing with religious experience, truth means close correspondence between experience and its expression. Here it stands broadly for sincerity. (3) Truth may mean correspondence with other departments of knowledge. This was the sense in which it was used by those who contended that the first chapter of Genesis was true. That chapter is true to its own purpose, *i.e.* it claims the world as beginning in God and proceeding from Him, but it is not true in the

sense of agreeing minutely with the scientific record of historic origins. (4) When we say, "Let God be true and every man a liar," truth is conceived as wholly moral. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" expresses the certainty that God in every personal relation will be found to be just. (5) But there is another sense of truth when we speak of a "true religion." What is meant is the power of the religion to interpret truly God's relation to man and to bring man into a right relation to God. This is the estimate of a religion by its fruits. It is the standard which is applied to religions in comparing one with another. And it is most legitimate—for religion ought not to be measured by any standard outside its own. Science is good when it produces the fruits of science—knowledge, understanding, discovery. Philosophy is held to be good or bad in proportion as it produces the fruits of philosophy, an inclusive synthesis of facts of life making them intelligible. Religion must be held to be good when it produces the effects of religion—when character under its influence is really grafted into that moral and spiritual order of things which actually exists, and which religion knows as the Kingdom of God. It is by living trustfully in that order that men

really serve the highest interests of the race and the eternal interest of the soul.

The question, what are the proper fruits of religion, if it is to have a scientific answer, requires a very wide induction. No private opinion, no authority, no Church, no single writing can be allowed to answer a question which concerns all religions primitive and ancient, pagan, mediaeval or modern, including the ideals and the institutions of different religions, the literature, the ethics, theologies, institutions which are the product of the religious principle or impulse.

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It is a part of the mastery of Jesus Christ in the sphere of religious thought that a world-wide array of facts does not take us out of the range of ideas with which He has supplied us. Whatever may have been the exact meaning of the Kingdom of God in the minds of men in the first Christian century, it supplies the most universal term for the ideal of religion. It involves a religious interpretation of life in all life's phases. It attributes a supreme authority and power to the Being who is the object of worship. It conceives the world as the sphere of the rule of a Person whose will is made known to us in the moral order, and whose character is revealed in our

spiritual experience. The Kingdom is clearly a name for something that exists. God is King even when He is not known as such, and though the world may need to know His Kingdom as it has not yet done. On the human side entrance to the Kingdom means coming to a knowledge of the King. It is the fulfilment of the perfect destiny of manhood. It is rescue from the shams, illusions, sins, and sorrows of human life.

The comparative study of personal religious development constantly illustrates the principle that when one faculty develops another counterbalancing faculty appears about the same time. Thus the habit of acquisition and the passion for justice appear together, and one is clearly intended to balance the other. Similarly there is a union and balance between the sex consciousness and the religious consciousness. They commonly rise together about the same age. The intensity of either frequently varies in proportion to the other, and each finds its most natural check from excess in the presence of the other. Primitive races made the age of puberty the age of initiation into religious rites, and the statistics of Christian experience show that between 15 and 20 is most frequently the age

of conversion. One knits man to the race, the other unites him with God. Each finds its end in a union, one binding to this world by new ties, the other linking with an existence that lies beyond sense and conquering this world in the power of the world to come. Both are planted in the race that it may find contentment in performing onerous service for the good of generations yet to be.

A method of this kind gives confidence that *the spiritual consciousness is planted in man that the personality it creates may live trustfully and steadfastly in God's world here.* The ultimate effects of religion should all be positive, helpful, strengthening, empowering. They are the supreme enrichment of human life, and are meant to make men sure that amidst all toil there remaineth a rest for the people of God. This is a keynote which unlocks many of the details of crude primitive religions and runs up into the highest. To talk of testing religion by its fruits does not therefore mean that it is becoming simply religious humanism. Behind the apparent humanism is the conviction that the perfection of the religious life is a perfect "fruit" because it requires a perfect correspondence or harmony between the creature and the Creator.

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Among the fruits of religion we may reckon the fear of God, understood as reverence for the absolute justness of His sway, confidence that transgression brings penalty, and that forgiveness must precede release from the consequences of sin. For a being so liable to failure as man is, it is a necessity of life to know that even though physical, moral, social, and legal penalties continue to operate, if the spiritual relationship has been set right, sin is remitted; and that life set right with God at length comes right in every other respect. The fear of God thus passes on to confidence in the redeeming power and function of God, or in God as Redeemer from sin. This means that He has done, can do, and continues to do all that is necessary to deliver men from sin when they sincerely desire to be released. Sin is real, but it can be blotted out from the Divine Presence. It is part of the revelation of God in history that God has provided whatever means are necessary for this. This is clearly a divine and not a human function. Man can be redeemed but he cannot be the redeemer. Recovery from the dominion and power of sin depends on the discovery that God is Redeemer, and has Himself provided the mechanics and dynamics required for overcoming sin.

One of the fruits of religion in the life that now is is a walk with God. The element of feeling—the awe of God, the passion for justice, the confidence of having overcome the world, these in the soul of the religious man make religion real and potent, and they account for the transcendent experience of religious joy. When feeling is absent there can be no joy in God.

Salvation is a victory over the world, not a submission to it. It is a vision of life rectified by a true relation to God, and it keeps men battling to achieve their vision. Philosophy provides a synthesis, which tends to make men content with the world as it is. Religion accepts the world as the basis for its action, but not as final. It works for the ideal. It is essentially constructive. It has an infinite work to do. Its language must always be :

I will not cease from mental fight
Nor let my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In England's green and pleasant land.

Religious assurance implies the inheritance of eternity.
The essential experience of religion creates a vivid and intense sense of personality. It is the historical origin of all demands for personal free-

dom. From the first Christian era to our own time the battle for liberty has been fed by religious enthusiasm and religious conviction. It would be a cruel consummation to end this heart hunger with an obliteration of personality, and religion at its best has always rejected such an end. The soul is created by God for life. He is God of the living, and all live to Him.

Any conception of the future must be true both to the love of God and the conscious needs of the regenerate soul. The Mohammedan Paradise is unworthy of the soul even at its earthly best. Hindoo religion is intolerably hampered by having no belief in the love of God. The transmigration of souls is a philosophical, not a genuinely religious doctrine. The soul, conscious of God and of itself, requires for its future world a world of intensified but beatified personalities, finding satisfaction in all the forms of happiness which can be shared without being diminished; and such are the satisfactions which love brings.

§ 7.

The work of the critics on the records of revelation has given rise to a new demand in the religious mind—the demand for a basis of certainty that

there is a real relationship between God and man which may be verified and realised in experience. So long as the records were unchallenged this question did not necessarily arise, or if it arose it could be burked. But the emphasis laid on the relative character of much which had passed for absolute, in the revelation to Israel, has for many minds transferred the whole history into the sphere of the relative, and set men seeking elsewhere for evidence of real and final relationship between God and man. This is the motive behind the eager and uncritical acceptance of all sorts of statements of spiritual experience. The time has come for some orientation of this movement.

In dealing with recorded facts of spiritual experience, normal and abnormal, outside the Old and New Testaments, as religious data, the supremacy of the Christian experience need not be challenged. The final religious experience is an experience of moral regeneration and spiritual birth, into a Kingdom of God in which Jesus Christ is seen to be fully and finally Lord. But the apex is so splendid and commanding that it sets us examining the base. In doing this and tracing the operation of spiritual instincts and the records of religious personalities, we are examining

the lower ranges of the religious life. Religion is not dissolved into experiences luminous or illusive. We are examining rather the impulses which work beneath the surface in mankind and which send men to Jesus Christ for their explanation. We are exploring the natural and supernatural foundations of religion in the race.

In land-surveying to orient a plan means to mark its situation or bearing, with respect to the four points of the compass. The orientation of a new movement is the endeavour to find its relation to the cardinal points of the Christian compass, such as our Lord's teaching and His Person as it is revealed in the facts of His life, His death and rising again, which form together what we call the Gospel. Orientation is essentially a scientific process, and must be carried on free from passion, prejudice or dogmatic prepossession. We may get two hints from recent science for our orientation. Science is giving up the obsession which endeavoured to explain everything in terms of something lower than itself in the order of being. For instance, the mnemonic theory accounts for certain habits of plants and animals by assuming that they possess a germinal memory or mind. In using such a theory to account for the characteristics of

life science is giving up the method of explaining the higher by the lower, and has begun to explain the lower in the terms of the higher ; a process which is clearly destined to bring scientific theory nearer to the religious interpretation of the world than it has been for at least two centuries.

In another direction this approximation has also taken place. Students of particular departments of science have discovered that each order of life can only be dealt with on the basis of recognising certain postulates and working hypotheses, which belong to it alone. With that recognition we pass away from the era of monisms, or attempts to explain all phenomena as factors of a single force. Science is driven to face the problem presented by its own discovery that it has to deal with various kinds of reality, and that the hypotheses which are sufficient for the lower are inadequate for the higher. It is making room in its scheme for the categories which belong to the moral and spiritual order of life.

§ 8.

For the scientific valuation of religious experiences, any serious endeavour to describe religious experience and appreciate the value of spiritual

experience, though not expressed in the technical terms of a theologian, may legitimately be used.

It has become evident that the records of the spiritual history of the saints, as they are contained in books of devotion and biography, have certain broad correspondences, and these facts have a tendency to repeat themselves in different ages and in all forms of the religious life. The unity of spiritual experience can be traced, with almost unbroken continuity, at least from New Testament days to our own. One of the first Christian thinkers in recent times to make use of this evidence was the late R. W. Dale. In his book *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels*, he outlined in his own eloquent and forceful way the argument that the spiritual experience of Christian men and women in all generations is, in itself, a substantial verification of the Gospel story. There is still no better statement than his, of the position that Christian experience proves the existence and influence of a spiritual order, which is part of our heritage. There is now a whole harvest of literature garnered from this field. Professor Frank Granger's *Soul of a Christian* is a sympathetic and scientific study of some of the great Christian minds, and their relation to the

spiritual Kingdom. Professor William James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* has made a summary of the evidence with a view to assessing its value for psychology and philosophy, but without adequate means of appreciating and valuing its religious worth.

America, where the Emersonian tradition seems to increase in power, has produced a crop of writers whose books go by the name of the "New Thought,"¹ a much happier name than the misnomer in this country which called the same phenomenon a "New Theology."

The New Thought constructs many harmonies on two notes—(1) that the real man is the soul in man, invisible, immortal, potentially free, and (2) that life really begins with us when we become conscious of the presence of God moving upon the soul, inspiring and leading it, seeking to perfect it.

Along with these may be mentioned² a deter-

¹The books by Mr. Horatio W. Dresser : *Voices of Freedom, Living by the Spirit, In Search of a Soul*, and a book by R. W. Trine, entitled *In Tune with the Infinite*.

²Professor Percy Gardner in his *Exploratio Evangelica, Historic View of the New Testament, Modernity and the Churches*, has done something to supply a scholarly argument for a movement which elsewhere has made progress by bare uncritical assertion.

mined attempt to show that the essential founda-
tions of Christianity are not in the past but in
the eternal nature of the soul and its relation to
the cosmos ; not so much in the historic facts
of any religion as in the experience of the reli-
gious ; and that the real claim of Christ's teaching
on our time is that it satisfies most completely
the present, and therefore also the eternal, needs
of the human spirit. These are resolute attempts
to import humanism into religion, and to give to
a full religious experience a new hold on the
modern mind on the ground of its serviceableness.

The revived interest in the intenser forms of the
spiritual life is closely connected with this move-
ment, and yet may be distinguished from it. It is
less scientific, more historical and literary. The
phenomena of saintliness and the lives of the
saints have laid hold with fresh authority on the
life of our time. There is a cult of S. Francis of
Assisi, of Santa Teresa, Madame Guyon, S. John
of the Cross, Henri Suso, and Julian of Norwich,
and the English mystics of early and later date
have more readers and admirers to-day than they
had when they lived. John Woolman and George
Fox, and, perhaps one may say, Oliver Cromwell,
are better understood as "men of the spirit,"

and less mercilessly criticised from the Philistine point of view, than at any previous period of our history. We begin to understand the nature of their impulses, and to appreciate even their eccentricities as efforts of a pent-up stream on its way to the sea.

The late Father Tyrrell, with his motto "*revelation is experience, not statement*," has given the movement which identifies religion with spiritual experience its best literary expression in recent time. Baron von Hügel's two volumes on the *Mystical Element in Religion* represent the fullest attempt yet made to balance the mystical, intellectual, and rational elements in religion. The Friends in England and America have found in the movement a new opportunity for their specific witness, and have made valuable contributions to its progress.¹ The writings of Professor Inge represent the Anglican interest in the intellectual statement of man's spiritual relations. His books have gone far to establish the *rationale* of the Johannine type in modern Christian thought.

This revived interest in the forms of the spiritual life indicates an awakening of the mind

¹ Rufus Jones' *Studies in Mystical Religion* (Macmillan & Co.), will best repay study as an introduction to the whole movement.

of the Christian Church to some neglected facts in our common heritage which should have important results. When religion is defined in terms of experience the mind begins to seek for categories under which all forms of religious experience may be set. These experiences are in themselves so personal, vital, and sharply differentiated that to the individual they always seem solitary, unique, and ultimate. But regarding objectively experiences which can only be realised subjectively, it is evident that as the race-consciousness lives in the individual in the experience of sex, so also does the God-consciousness make itself felt in the individual, producing the phenomena of the spiritual life. The bare scientific frame of those experiences is the consciousness of a sentient and intelligent part that there lives in it the life which animates the whole. Our kinship with God makes us concerned with the character and purpose of God towards us.

When it is said—as it frequently is now—that religion is necessary because it meets a human need, we risk the criticism that the need is the origin of the religion. Religion is a “supply” manufactured to meet a “demand.” This is neither true nor satisfactory. Religion is too ultimate,

it lies too near the beginning of things in man for such an explanation. Its function has been creative, not secondary and utilitarian. It has played too vital a part in the history of the race to be explained in this fashion. If religion has brought a revelation of God, it must begin with the God who thus reveals Himself. What we know as religious need is the experience that opens the way to revelation—the need of a moral vindication of life, the need of strength for life's tasks, the need of forgiveness, or the need of finding somewhere in the universe something at least as high and penetrating as the work of the spirit that is the "candle of the Lord" in man. If these needs are the call of God to the spirit of man, we can understand them. Through them He finds entrance for His revelation of Himself to the mind of man. Through them the dim elemental consciousness of God first obtains clearness, and becomes sharp and definite. But the first postulate behind all such explanations is the existence of a spiritual Being who interpenetrates the whole of His Creation, whose nature and character are indeed made known by the things He has made, but whose power and love can be perfectly known only through acts of self-revelation.

PART II

FACTS AND FACTORS IN RELIGION

"Keep the eye steadily on the facts," Professor Jowett used to say, "for facts are constantly changing—words remain the same. They acquire a false show of certainty, and men who deal with them may draw conclusions which are very far from the truth. . . . Words want constant examination and analysis, for words tend to outrun facts. They become symbols of ideas. They thus dominate the mind and prevent it from seeing facts as they are."

§ 9.

IN the conditions of our time, the Master of Balliol's advice may almost be made an eleventh commandment; for it is becoming increasingly difficult to bring all the religious facts, as they are seen to-day, under the traditional categories which have come to us from the discussions of other days. Scientific categories are inadequate to express spiritual truths, and scientific terminology

often obscures rather than illumines when it is employed to describe and correlate religious facts ; and, on the other hand, the traditional religious categories are heavily laden with associations, worn so threadbare in discussion that they become unsatisfactory for those who want simplicity and clearness of thought.

It is this which gives special interest to every attempt to broaden the fact basis on which religion rests, and to bring out those verifications of spiritual truth in experience which have, both in the past and the present, led to the vitality of Christian doctrine.

schl
This is the point of contact between the scientific-religious tendency of thought in England already described, and Ritschlianism, which, beginning in Germany, is exercising a considerable and spreading influence in this country. To Ritschl, the Christian consciousness is primary and authoritative. The Ritschlian is as anxious as a modern man of science to accumulate historical facts, and, like a modern man of science, his instinct is to reverence a fact more than an archbishop. The point of view is of course somewhat different ; for, while science accumulates facts as such, Ritschl's point is that religion values facts as they affect

man's consciousness of the nature of his destiny and the means of attaining it. The historical fact, or the fact of experience, is assimilated in the religious consciousness, and has what he calls a value-judgment attached to it, that is, it is estimated in proportion to its worth for the life and destiny of the soul.

value
judgm

Ritschl has been welcomed in this country because it was felt that his work is on the right side. His welcome was dubious, with a doubt which intends to increase, because we are not satisfied as to the means he employs to get to his ends. His methods appeal to what may be called the positive attitude of the English temperament, but, as yet, they appear to leave out too many essential factors to satisfy us as a doctrinal statement. But we may welcome Ritschl, and all other influences which combine to emphasise the independence and authority of the religious consciousness, for it has become clear that it is here that the vitality of religion is to be found. For many who have lost the authority of an infallible book, and who have no place for the authority of an infallible Church, the Christian religion is really alive, creative, interesting, productive, and potent, perhaps more truly than it has ever been. So far as

Reichenbach: Unifying the Social Order

this is so, it means that men have found that in being themselves they must be religious, that is, must base their lives on some conscious relation to God; and in being religious they become Christian, that is, they find that the truest relation between man and God is both expressed and created for all time in Jesus Christ. They have found their authority in Him.

When Sir Edward Russell declared that the most marked change in religion which he had witnessed was the decay of experimental preaching, he touched the Christian church of his country under the fifth rib, for decay in religious experience is the decay of personal religion—and personal religion is the life of all the rest. This is the building, the rest is scaffolding. Doctrines and institutions, creeds, ritual, churches and church systems grow out of and attempt to express religious experience; and none of them can survive when it is absent. So that for England to-day, it has become a central and vital problem to determine what is the normal Christian consciousness, what are its contents, its outstanding features, and how they can be quickened and reproduced most completely in every individual, so that the Christian disciple shall respond to the whole

gamut of Christian instinct and emotion and thought. Christian Churches could afford to limit their expansiveness, and to be less cumbered with much serving, if they could seriously concentrate on producing the ideal Christian type. If all Churches were engaged in helping to create the complete Christian consciousness in their adherents, we should be moving rapidly towards an ideal unity in Christendom.

Anyone who watches intelligently and closely the aims and results of popular evangelism knows that, to "get religion," in the popular mind, does not mean primarily to acquire certain beliefs, but to experience certain changes in character. It is in this sense that the man in the street feels that religion satisfies a need of his nature. He wants inward peace, equilibrium of mind, freedom from bondage to passion, the sense of release from what disturbs his conscience, and confidence in the presence of the unseen and unknown that lies beyond our little circle of light. These are universal needs—the needs not of any class but of the race as such.

A noted psychologist¹ has worked out some sort of relation between the stages of belief and

¹ Starbuck.

the psychological changes which accompany physical development, showing that the sensitiveness to different portions of the Christian message varies in proportion to the age of development. Some beliefs, such as belief in religion as a life within, tend to grow continuously with a definite progress throughout life; the belief in God grows in emphasis as years advance; the perception of God in Christ, according to his figures, is at its maximum between the ages of twenty and twenty-three; the ethical instinct is the most constant and persistent force active in child life; and belief in immortality increases as life goes on. The general conclusion which should be drawn from such observations is that there is a spiritual order of existence of which we become conscious in proportion to our sensitiveness; or in other words, that our beliefs express real relations to a spiritual order, but that our sensitiveness to those relations varies with our development. R. L. Stevenson says that "nature is ever on the side of the most sensitive." Whatever affects our sensitiveness to spiritual things, gives us vision either more or less clear of their reality. The aim of the empiricist in religion, who does not care much about creeds but a great

deal about the effects of religion, is to produce that condition of sensitiveness in his subjects, which he finds to give the best result.

In the course of an experience divided between the religion of the pulpit, the sick room, the university, the workshop, the slum, and the study, the importance of this question has become increasingly clear, and the absence of guidance from recognised and official teachers in such matters, forces the mind to do its own thinking. The Christian consciousness is found in all Churches and developing under all forms of the Christian creeds ; but theoretically it is hardly ever treated as a fact by itself, almost always as the direct consequence of adopting some form of creed. The experience of relation to a spiritual order is assumed to follow the creed ; but this reverses the order in life, where the creed usually follows the experience. The religion by which men live is a religion constantly verified, and therefore verifiable in consciousness and experience ; and this suggests that it is a practical, experimental relation of man to God and to the spiritual order.

Many men who have no creed, and no ability to make one, may be made sufficiently sensitive to, and conscious of, spiritual things, to come into

some conscious relation to God and His Kingdom. When the Spirit of God moves upon his life he then turns to the Bible or to eminent religious personalities for help to enable him to understand the new experience which has come to him.

§ 10.

It is apparent that one effect of looking at things in this perspective, is to throw great emphasis on the nature and function of religious personality. When Dr. Harnack in the correspondence known as "Babel und Bibel," wrote that "revelation is in the last resort a matter of immediate experience," he meant that we have to deal in the history of revelation with the record of the experiences of persons to whom revelation came. It is therefore of first importance to ask all possible questions about the resources of personality. How far is personality capable of receiving exact impressions of spiritual existences? How far is it to be relied upon in its testimony? What is its relation to consciousness? How far is the consciousness of spiritual things an evolution from within, and how far the result of special sensitiveness to the existence of a spiritual order outside ourselves? These questions, and others like them, need to be asked and answered

if the ideas described as in the air are to take their place in an orderly system. Meanwhile, we may note some of the facts put at our service with regard to the religious personality and the consciousness of God. The experiments and suggestions with which the psychologists have furnished us, touch our religious thinking at certain points.

They have given us an enlarged idea of the possibilities of personality. ^{Persona} Personality has been, and still remains, the final mystery to philosophy and to science. What it is, what its powers are, what is normal, what is abnormal, what is human, and what is superhuman for personality, are questions which every generation would have answered in a different way. Religion has always demanded for personality larger powers and a larger place than science has been willing to admit; and, more particularly, the psychologist of the older school¹ has been inclined to pin down the valid experiences of personality within limits which left no room for testimony to spiritual realities. The testimony then, to an enlarged idea of personality from the side of psychological science, marks a real advance.

¹This is also true of the laboratory psychologists such as Titchener.

The idea that personality is a fact both unfathomed and unfathomable has hung about the confines of religion and philosophy since their beginning. "Though you trod every path," says *note* Heraclitus, "you could not find the limits of the soul, so deep is its essence." Ignatius the proto-martyr declared that he was a God-bearer—bearing God within his breast. "Go deep enough into man, and you will find God," the Transcendentalists have maintained; and the mystics have found in the depth of the soul, the true image of God: "The ground or centre of the soul is so high and glorious a thing that it cannot properly be named, even as no adequate name can be found for the Infinite and Almighty God. In this ground lies the image of the Holy Trinity. . . . God pours Himself out into our spirit as the sun rays forth its natural light into the air, and fills it with sunshine, so that no eye can tell the difference between the sunshine and the air; how far less this Divine union of the created and the uncreated spirit."¹

More recently an attempt has been made to give scientific precision and a philosophical nomenclature

¹ Tauler, in Overton's *Law, Nonjuror and Mystic*, p. 152, and *A Method of Prayer*, by Madame Guyon, p. 9.

to this idea of a vastly extended personality ; to bring out the fact that personality can not only establish relations with all the grades and stages of creation, but also runs into the spiritual world, and, like an iceberg, however massive and impressive in the portions that are visible, carries two-thirds of its proportions in the invisible depths.

For our present purpose we may describe personality by its characteristic quality. It is a permanent possibility of entering into conscious relations with every kind of reality, spiritual or material, in the universe. In its simplest form, these relations are with the world of material things—things below man in the order of being ; in a more advanced stage, personality enters into conscious relations with other persons, and, in so doing, becomes both more conscious of itself and capable of comparison with others, and, to that extent, includes self and other selves ; in its highest ranges, personality seems to enter into conscious relations with powers above it—with God, who, being Himself personal but not limited by personality, has forms of existence which transcend our normal knowledge altogether.

The beginnings of religious psychology serve to indicate that even its best exponents are

trying to describe facts for which they have insufficient categories.¹ Their world is not large enough. The facts are much more simply and naturally accounted for in the terms of religion. They require as their explanation what religion postulates, and can alone explain: that the soul retains its correspondence with God, from whom it comes, and is occasionally susceptible of moments of vivid apprehension of that fellowship, when the spiritual is more real than the physical world.

§ 11.

illumination There is a literature extending over many centuries dealing with the experience of illumination which, it is claimed, brings men into the immediate presence of God. The "practice of the presence of God"² was one of the familiar disciplines of monastic life. It links itself historically with the Neoplatonists and their endeavours to experience the Absolute. And further back it may be traced to sources in the far East, where the practice of entering the Great Silence seems

¹ Books like Binet's *Alterations of Personality*, Myers' *Human Personality and its Survival after Death*, and James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

² See extracts from Brother Lawrence. Notes, p. 277.

perilously near to the idea of entering Nirvana. We need not concern ourselves with the abuse, except so far as it points to the existence of faculties which have a proper use.

It is probable that if we could get at root facts—a thing very difficult to do in matters of religious experience—we should find that in a large number of cases, religious belief rests on, or begins with, some experience of the awakening of the soul to a spiritual presence in life. It is not necessarily associated with any special form of the Christian religion, and it may be found outside the sphere of operation of the Christian religion.

The fact being human in the broadest sense, and found in East and West, in modern and ancient times, points to the existence of resources in human personality of which we have hitherto had no adequate account in psychological science. The experience of a spiritual presence is at least consistent with the idea of distinguished psychologists, that man as man has a larger self than that which finds occupation in ordinary life, that that larger self or soul has a consciousness of influences and relations which escape our ordinary senses, and that occasionally the higher consciousness bears witness to its existence, protesting against being

ignored, by what may be described as irruptions into the normal consciousness.

While the experience is common to many classes of minds, its significance varies according to the character of the experiencing person. Everything which affects that character is important—intelligence, ideas, habits, traditions—for it is through these that the experience is interpreted; moral qualities, aims, motives—for it is through these that the moral content of the experience is grasped; spiritual experience and vision—for the illumination when it comes means most to the eyes which are best trained to observe the light. It is only in the fullest development of the Christian character that we find the highest interpretation of this experience. It delivers up its highest meaning as a revelation of a spiritual and personal God.

Professor Sir William Ramsay quotes a case where the illumination found and arrested a rough-rider on a prairie. David Brainerd¹ knew a Red Indian who had been admitted to the presence of “a great man who informed him that he loved, pitied, and desired to do him good. He saw the

¹ See notes, (a) illumination in non-Christian minds, (b) illumination as a Christian experience.

great man in a world above at a great distance from this. He was clothed with the day ; yea with the brightest day he ever saw, a day of many years, yea of everlasting continuance."

An English Unitarian¹ tells how, one brilliant Sunday morning in a walk from the "Cat and Fiddle" above Macclesfield, suddenly without warning, "I felt that I was in heaven—an inward state of peace and joy and assurance indescribably intense, accompanied with a sense of being bathed in a warm glow light, as though the external condition had brought about the internal effect—a feeling of having passed beyond the body, though the scene around me stood out more clearly and as if nearer to me than before, by reason of the illumination in the midst of which I seemed to be placed."

2nd ed.
St Paul

The late Agent-General for the Cape of Good Hope, the late Sir Thomas Fuller, published, during his lifetime, a pamphlet entitled *Man's Relation to the Universe through Cosmic Emotion*. The essay makes no attempt at being metaphysical ; it is rather an endeavour to tran-

¹ *My Quest for God*, London, 1897, pp. 268-269, abridged. By J. Trevor. Quoted by Professor William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 396-397.

scribe and give an account of impressions "made vivid to the writer while living in a country where the vast open spaces and the rich clear lights seemed to claim a perpetual affinity with the upper zones of human feeling." He endeavours to analyse the emotion produced in the mind by the majestic scenes of South African nature, the solitude and the grandeur of the Matoppos, and their speech to the soul. His points are, that when nature has stirred that feeling which he describes as the "cosmic emotion" in man, it gives him a sense of something in himself and in nature which is (1) infinite, (2) beautiful, (3) ordered, or following a law of its own. "If," he says, "I dared to describe the emotion with which the mind regards organic life and the organised universe, I should say it was mainly stirred by four elements—law, life, freedom, purpose." A reviewer of Sir Thomas Fuller's pamphlet in the *Westminster Gazette*, who knew both Sir Thomas Fuller and Mr. Cecil Rhodes, recognised in the pamphlet ideas which he had heard the latter express, and wrote to the Agent-General asking whether he had ever talked over the matter with Mr. Rhodes. He was told that the topic had been a favourite one in their conversations ;

and that Mr. Rhodes had remarked characteristically, when he first saw Sir Thomas Fuller's essay : "You've got it Fuller, you've organised my thought."

Endeavours to express this emotion are common enough in the poets; but, as poetical experience is largely coloured by imagination, something is gained by casual prose statements of fact. They indicate that in minds not consciously or by training religious, certain scenes call into play a consciousness usually latent in them, which in some half-developed fashion is of the same order as the religious consciousness, and may be developed into it.

When we pass from the experience of non-religious minds to minds distinctly religious, the experience presents itself with some features which are common, and differences even more striking. The fact that the mind or the life is already in some sort of harmony with the spiritual existence which breaks upon it, makes the discovery not terrible or awful so much as joyful and exhilarating. The soul finds in it the goal of much seeking ; it grasps a certainty after which it has been feeling.¹

¹Published experiences, amplifying this theme, of Lord Tennyson, J. B. of the *Christian World*, Jonathan Edwards,

*from a
city.* → It is important to obtain a valuation of such experiences as these, which shall neither under-rate the facts nor over-rate their religious value. They are not yet religion, but they are the experiences which make religion a necessity. No man who has passed through the experience of an immediate apprehension of the spiritual Presence can help thinking about it, inquiring about it, reasoning about it, comparing notes with others who have passed through a similar experience, going to the great classic experiences for guidance, and ultimately forming an outline at least of religious doctrine, practice and institution in the light of his experience. *→* The present writer may be allowed this much of personal confession. *Confession* He was engaged in developing the social values of religion in an industrial district, and making the most of it as an instrument for promoting human betterment, when he was abruptly arrested by an experience which for him transfigured life, and left him with the conviction that he had been in the presence of the Eternal Light. The experience left him stunned and physically limp with intensity of emotion, but with a strange sense of exhilaration

J. A. Macfadyen, Horace Bushnell, R. W. Dale, and of Brother Lawrence, will be found in the notes at the end of this book.

and attainment. It changed the meaning of religion and gave it a new emphasis in his own experience. From that time he has had no doubt that the present worth of religion depends on filling it with the sense of the Divine presence in worship and action. Religion becomes the great and absorbing reality. The most intricate practices of ritual or expressions of dogma acquire an interest which makes them important in proportion to their content of God. The central Person of the Christian faith, Jesus Christ, is seen as the centre and soul of all religious truth. The world as S. Paul put it, in the light of God is seen to be created in Christ Jesus.

In determining the nature and significance of an experience which makes prophets and apostles and saints, any explanation which resorts to the hypothesis of hallucination is ruled out of court. The cause must at least be equal to the effect. Prophets and apostles and saints are no hallucination in the history of the world ; and although they may have been subject to hallucinations like other people, it is quite certain that no hallucination ever made either a prophet or an apostle or a saint. It is not a *vera causa* for such an effect. The only explanation which is tolerable to those who speak of what

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they know is that they have seen the reality, and those who do not see are as yet blind. As S. Paul argued that no man sees Jesus Christ as He was, until he sees the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, so we may plead that no man sees the universe as it is until he sees the glory of God in the face or expression of the universe. The two glories are not the same, yet both are of God. The universe is replete with intelligence and law, order and beauty, life and love, which are essentially reflections of the presence of spirit. The world is a kind of skiagram where we see the shadow, and from the shadow argue to the eternal light which casts it; we see it as it is most really when we not only see the intelligence and law, order and beauty, life and love, but feel also the spiritual presence which lies behind them; which they imply, and which does manifest itself to man wherever the elements of spiritual life latent in his nature are quickened into consciousness.

§ 12.

The religious view of the world is an interpretation of life through personality. For it life is a process in which the human spirit deals not only with things, but with God, spirit being the ground

common to man and God. The basis of the superiority of this interpretation over every other is that personality is the highest category in which we can think. The universe as matter and force gives us science; as revealing beauty it gives us art; as revealing order and intelligence it gives us philosophy; as revealing a personal will and character and spirit it gives Religion. An element of mysticism has a permanent place in religion, because in personality and in all personal relations there is an element of mystery, of the unknown. Any organised system of thought goes beyond its province and powers when it tries to systematise religion to a point where there is no room for freedom of intercourse and development in the relations between God and man. The noblest instincts of the soul then rise in rebellion and break through the creeds.

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as Religion

It is a fashion at present to say that God is super-personal, and that we are to learn to transcend personality. Perhaps we may some day know what that means. Meanwhile it is important to note that whatever has reality to us derives its meaning from the fact that it can be interpreted through personality. People who want to become super-personal are likely to end in becoming less than persons.

God as
personal

There is nothing more decisive than this—that Jesus Christ is Himself a Person. Indeed, He is the only perfectly complete Person in human history, for He never fails to deal with His Father in every event. Religion reaches its supreme expression in Him, but it remains personal, a relation of Father and Son. He bore our sins and carried our sorrows, but He did not transcend personality. We may enter by love and sympathy into the personal experience of others, but we do not escape or transcend personality. Personalities may interpenetrate by growing together, by bearing common sorrow, by meeting in common labours, but interpenetration instead of destroying makes them fuller and richer.

We cannot think of personality as a ponderable quantity which can exist without belonging to anyone, and then be portioned out among a number of people. It is that supreme quality in our personal being which makes it possible for us to enter into personal relations with other beings, and the product in feeling, thought, and will which is the result of those relations. It inheres in actual persons like sweetness in the sweet and the aroma in the rose. Everyone has more or less of personality in proportion as his

relations to God, to men, and to the world are complete and adequate or incomplete and inadequate. We can go on completing those relations and making them more adequate through all eternity, but there is nothing to suggest that in that process we transcend personality. Indeed, a true personality is one of the things which a man knows to be more precious than life, it is one of the things for which men will die, knowing that it endures beyond death and continues its life and work beyond the grave. We may, therefore, conveniently dismiss phrases about transcending personality as, for the present, useless. "The spiritual progress of mankind is an unmeaning phrase, unless it means a progress of personal character and to personal character. It is simply unintelligible unless understood to be in the direction of more perfect forms of personal life. This consideration may suggest the true notion of the relation in which we stand to God; that He is not merely a Being who has made us, but that He is a Being in whom we exist, and into whom we grow."¹ It is a supreme interest of religion to secure complete personality. Its business is the making of persons, and that can only be

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¹T. H. Green.

completed as men learn to live in God, so that the full consciousness of God lives in them. It lives by the conviction that it is humanly possible for all that this may be so. As education aims at initiating the mind into a rational and intelligible order, so the will is capable of being established in a moral order, and the soul in a spiritual order or Kingdom of God. It is the essence of religious education to bring every person who passes through it into this great initiation.

§ 13.

Religious education no less than conversion rests on the assurance that personality may pass into new states of consciousness. This is what makes normal religious development possible. The abnormal has opened our eyes to the meaning of the normal. The experience of alterations of personality is a well authenticated phenomenon passing through a great variety of manifestations, such as spontaneous and induced somnambulism, the amnesia and insensibility of hysterical patients, voluntary and unconscious actions, automatic writing, the plurality of consciousnesses in healthy subjects, artificial personality created by suggestion

and the phenomena of spiritism.¹ The importance of such investigations of the abnormal is that they bring to light tendencies which are at work less conspicuously in normal persons. It is a commonplace of this kind of study, that experiments performed upon hysterical patients give analogous results with healthy persons, but with somewhat less certainty. Processes which are seen in these abnormal cases are often at work in less obvious results.

The general conclusion to which these experiments and inquiries point seems likely to become one of the recognised factors in all our thoughts about personality. It was a kind of axiom of the old psychology that each person constituted an indivisible unity. But this important conclusion has of late been greatly modified. If the unity of the person is maintained, it is no longer a simple unity. If a personality can become double, that proves that it is a compound—a grouping of many elements, each of which is or has a consciousness of its own. It is part of the business, as it were, of the adult and normal mind to maintain order and unity amongst the diverse elements which, in an abnormal condition, seem to split up, each

¹ See Binet, *Alterations of Personality*.

taking its own way with a consciousness of its own.

The importance of this for the purpose of religious thought is that it opens the possibility of changing the consciousness of a person without any breach of identity. Personality appears to have an almost unlimited power of acquiring new states of consciousness. It is in this way that consciousness and personality are distinguished. Consciousness denotes a collection of connected ideas held together, as it were, by a common point of view, a character and memory; and it arises out of a series of personal relations to the ideas or events which are thus held together. What the psychologists mean by a "double personality" is that two different consciousnesses in one person are sufficiently constant as to acquire a high degree of continuous action. It is then that the idea of a second ego is produced. But the second ego is properly called a hallucination; for, although the separate consciousnesses may exist, there is only one true person.

If illustrations are taken by psychologists from hysterical and hypnotic experiments, it should be noted that the appeal to the abnormal is made only to show exaggerated instances of the forces which

act in the normal in a sane and saving religion. The important fact is that it is possible to change the consciousness without a breach in personal identity. A new consciousness may be created to which the will gives deliberate ascendancy, and by which the character of the personality is ultimately determined.

For 1900 years, against all opposition, Christianity has borne witness to the possibility of creating a new consciousness. S. Paul's phrases are familiar enough—"the new creation," "the new life," "the new creature." His witness was, that when there is created in human personality the consciousness of God as a spiritual presence, of Christ as the redeeming power of God in humanity, of the Holy Spirit as the manifestation of God within, a man becomes another and a higher personality. He bears witness also to the existence of the new consciousness over against the old—"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind. . . . So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. vii.). And he finds in Jesus Christ that re-enforcement of the spiritual consciousness which

grad
delivers him from the "body of death." Psychological science is at length setting its seal to the Christian witness as to a "new creation."

Prayer
Nor can we overlook the importance of these psychological facts in regard to prayer. It is of the essence of prayer that, in praying, a man enters into certain conscious relations to God, he realises the spiritual order more vividly than in any other single act, and he enters in prayer into ideal relations with those for whom he prays. This means that, in steadfast and persistent prayer, a new consciousness is formed: the thought carries the soul with it, as it were, and makes it enfold new facts. The relations which are there realised gradually connect themselves together and form a character; and, in the case of lives where prayer is a constant factor, the ideal consciousness which is thus formed becomes, first, an alternative higher personality, existing, as it were, over against the lower and mundane ego, and ultimately in the saint becomes the true person. It may never entirely subordinate all the other elements which remain to bear witness to what has been, but the consciousness realised in prayer may secure the actual control of the personality.

The formation of this ideal consciousness in

prayer helps us to explain a large collection of facts in which those experiences, which are now described as "incursions of the subliminal consciousness," are reckoned as words of, or messages from, God. It is often difficult to know exactly what value to assign to the statement—"the Lord told me this" or "the Lord told me that." Sometimes the effect is not inconsistent with the cause to which it is ascribed ; and, at other times, one has no difficulty in recognising a very human source for these commands. The suggestion here made is consistent with both these facts. Sometimes, in prayer, a consciousness is formed so full of vivid realisation of the Divine will and nature, that any pronouncement from that consciousness entering into the normal and everyday consciousness comes with a divine authority ; but, where prayer is only the expression of a magnified egotism, the prayer consciousness, instead of ruling the normal ego, is ruled by it, and its deliverances have more of self than God. In the lives of the saints these deliverances of the higher consciousness very often have extraordinary authority and power. This is most clearly recorded in the lives of saintly women as *e.g.* in S. Teresa's autobiography :

“ I think it would be well to explain here what kind of speech that is which God makes use of to the soul, and what she feels, that so your Reverence may understand it ; for from the time when our Lord did me this favour (which I have mentioned), it often happens to me even now, as you will see by what follows. There are certain words very distinctly formed in the soul, which, though not heard with the corporeal ears, are understood much more expressly and clearly than if they were so heard : nor can the soul avoid understanding them, and giving her whole attention to them : and it is useless to resist, however much we may strive. When in this world we do not wish to hear, we can stop our ears, or else attend to other things, in such a way, that though we may hear the words, yet we shall not understand them. But when God speaks to the soul, there is no remedy whatever, but we are made to listen to the words whether we will or no ; and the understanding is obliged to be very attentive, in order to comprehend them. Thus, whether we wish or not, God wishes we should understand Him ; and because He is all-powerful, that which He resolves must be done, and so He is known as the true Lord of us all. Of this truth I have had

much experience, for the resistance I made continued almost two years, on account of the fears I had : and even now I feel this fear sometimes ; but resistance is of little use.”¹

§ 14.

Religious experience is more vital, large, true, *more* than any intellectual statement of it. A creed may be plain and clear, but there is always mystery in faith. If you want a creed you may rest in definite dogmas, if you want faith you must open your heart to an infinite mystery.

The steps of the mystic ladder are (1) purification, (2) illumination, (3) union with God. The mystics make illumination the consequence of purification. First purify yourself, then your eyes will be opened. This is the Psalmist's way. “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord and who shall stand in His holy place?” “He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, that hath not lifted up his soul to vanity nor sworn deceitfully.” This is the human preparation for Revelation. The New Testament approaches the same point from the other side. God has sought man. Jesus Christ has answered the age-long seeking of

¹ *The Life of Saint Teresa*. Written by herself. P. 183.

the soul. Therefore purify yourself ; your life and His are linked together. Where the mystics speak of union the epistles of S. John more cautiously and correctly speak of fellowship. Fellowship implies two persons, union obliterates one. When there are differences between the New Testament and the mystics, the New Testament is the guide to follow, but where they agree the mystics are the best illustrators of New Testament truth.

God has fellowship with us in all that reflects the divine character. The simplest act of love, when a child who sells matches in the street sacrifices twopence to buy a dinner for a friend, is fellowship with God. It is a fresh correspondence with the divine. Such correspondences are capable of indefinite extension.

The most incalculable force in the world is the force of God's will working in a consecrated will. We make ourselves foolish in trying to define how far it will go, just as a wise man will hold his tongue when he is asked to define limits of possible advance of electrical discovery. But electricity is a nature force, and the will of God is a spiritual and ethical power. It is wise to reserve judgment when people say this work can be done, and that cannot ; this prayer answered,

and that not. Faith believing in the impossible actualises the impossible. The view changes as you ascend the hill. The heights of saintliness have no known top ; beyond any yet reached there is always another. The element of mystery in our faith lies on its upward edge. We enter into communion with God. We know His goodness but not his power, or we trust His power but not His goodness ; there is always more to learn. We cannot know what He has in store for us. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Man's life, like Enoch's, is destined to be a walk with God, and how far we may go with the Great Companion no one can predict. It is more important to strengthen this faith in the general mind than to give the most exact definition of a Christian creed. It is better to set man looking up, reaching up, trusting God, committing himself to Him daily, than to make the creed of S. Athanasius as familiar as the multiplication table.

"A little faith is more than clearest views ;
 Wouldst these have ocean like a bubbling rill ?
 God without mystery were not God news,
 Wrestle not with the darkness but be still."

§ 15.

It is important to distinguish clearly between what faith has to say about the natural world, and what it has to say about the moral world. The natural world is the whole material universe with which we are allied through our senses. By the *al world* moral world we mean that whole province of human life which, so far as we know, man shares with God alone. In this province conscience is king. Man walks, so far as he walks at all, by the inner light. Such words as honour and truth, grace and disgrace, sin and forgiveness, reconciliation, love and peace and atonement have meaning only in the world of conscience. Here there is a second universe in which we are born to live.

little We have learned a great deal that is new in the last hundred years about the physical universe, but very little that is new about the moral world; indeed, we have forgotten much that our fathers knew. On the side of science there have been immense strides in acquisition of knowledge as to the way in which the world has been knit together. Discoverers have been able to trace operations of laws and forces through many stages of development. These forces have operated and co-

operated towards the same end, evidently a great and universal end. They have issued in the life of man. Though science cannot by searching find out God, it now speaks of an unknown reality which appears to be operating behind the forces which it knows. On this side recent developments have confirmed some early speculations by Christian teachers in a remarkable way. Very early in the history of the Church its faith was accepted by men who had been accustomed to speculate on the origin of all being; and some of these fastened on the truth which we find in the prologue of S. John's Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." In other words they saw that the universe in all its parts was penetrated, vitalised, directed by an immanent God. They dwelt on the conception of a divine Reason, Spirit, and Purpose which pervades all existence. One of the greatest minds in the history of Christian faith, that of Origen, was full of this idea, and under its inspiration he worked out the spiritual meaning

note

in i. On the Immanence of God.

of life. He has had many followers. The keynote in their writings is the conviction that a communion with the Divine is given to all who purify themselves with all the force of heart and soul and mind.

2nd ed. The truth of the indwelling of God in His world allies itself easily with the scientific doctrine of evolution, and it gives solemnity and dignity to the task of tracking through infinite stages the workings of the Divine Thought. No Christian Church has any interest in refusing to recognise this as a truth so long as it does not conceive it to be a statement of the Christian faith. It is important to refuse no ally in the age-long conflict against materialism. Maurice used to say, "It is often the hardest thing in the world really to believe in God." It is hard because some knowledge must go with belief. We cannot really believe without being able to say, "the God in whom I believe is the God whom I found in this or that experience." But it is also our first and greatest need really to believe in God. Men who cut themselves off from the supernatural sever themselves from the fountain of spiritual power.

In this matter all who are not against us are for us. It is Christian wisdom to recognise an alliance

for defence with all who maintain the spiritual nature and relationships of human life.

But historic Christianity stands for a special view of man's spiritual relationships—a view set forth not dogmatically but historically, not in a creed but in a Person. Philosophy may discuss monism. Christianity is certain about an ethical dualism. It has a story to tell in which all the perfect relationships are illustrated. It believes in the life and death of Jesus Christ, and His rising again, because it finds in these facts a reconciliation of God and man which is adequate to the deepest and hardest experience of life. For that supreme purpose the process does not change from generation to generation. The historic Person still holds the eternal truth. There is still only one Mediator between man and God through whom men come to moral agreement with God and full surrender to Him. It is still a first necessity to convince men that they are not by nature in the image they were destined to bear. We need the Gospel to work that conviction. Without the Christ we do not even know our own need. Till the light shines we do not know how dark it is. There are thousands of men and women, who pride themselves on being the very flower of

Trust → civilisation, who have never seen life in the light of its moral values; who do not see that there is as much difference between a selfish life and an unselfish one as there is between a dead thing and a living being; that the soul is dead while it lives for self, and begins to live when it lives in others. There are men to whom the moral meaning of life is so hidden that they do not even believe in deeds of sacrifice and disinterested service; when they hear of them they seek to explain them by inferior motives.

True (b) Behind the moral values of life are the spiritual; to be blind to these means colour-blindness for the God-like in man. It is on this side of our life that nothing can take the place of the presentation of the Saviour, who is the world's desire. *Sin* It is no healthy sign in an age like ours to have little sense of sin. It is no more safe to be without the sense of sin and its shame and curse, in a world like ours, than to walk blindfold among precipices. It is a perennial need of man's nature to be set in the presence of One who shows us all the sin when He shows us all the mercy that deals with it. The two-powered view of life which comes through Christ gives a grander and truer outlook than the one-powered view of natural religion. A

redeemed soul is a higher creation of Divine power than a blameless Greek virtuous man. It is truer to God, truer to man, better for us, better for the world, better for our fellows. It belongs to a larger scheme of things. The destiny of man in the Gospel is his real destiny. And apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ we are impotent to impart this view.

of 'Sons of Adam'

Thinking of the history of the natural world we think of an immanent Deity and a Divine Nature. But when we come to the things of the soul we are content to say:

“Behold what wondrous grace
The Father hath bestowed
On sinners of a mortal race
To call them sons of God.”

§ 16.

The supreme interests of history, whether modern or ancient, lie in the history of men and the history of movements, and, of the two, the first is the more central, for there is no movement which is not first incarnated in a life; and reforms, institutions, eras, and even religions, can only be interpreted through the men who lived in them and in whom they lived; thus personality, which is now

the chief interest of philosophy, may be regarded as the mainspring of history.

The enforcement of this truth was Carlyle's contribution to the study of history in modern times, and although much has been written which has modified his teaching, its essential truth is not to be shaken, for "bygone ages were actually filled
with by living men, not by protocols, state-papers, controversies and abstractions of men." The difference between history as it is often written and taught, and history as it might be presented to thought and imagination, is at least as great as the difference between a frozen lake and a moving, living, heaving, palpitating sea. Any view of past or present which claims fidelity to truth, must fill them with the sense of life and movement, struggle and conflict, aspiration, failure and achievement, the tug of the ideal and the weight of custom, the glow of spirit and the shadow of conflicting passion and momentary uncertainties, as the sea is filled with its own conflict and tidal harmony of tossing waves. It is because biography brings these forces and factors into relief that the study of history, so far as it is the literary presentment of fact, must always be largely biographical. In many of the men from

whom great movements and ideas spring, there is a certain quality easily recognisable to a practical eye, but hard to define satisfactorily. Matthew Arnold half described it when he wrote :

“Servants of God—or sons
 Shall I not call you? because
 Not as servants ye knew
 Your Father’s innermost mind,
 His who unwillingly sees
 One of his little ones lost—
 Yours is the praise of mankind
 Hath not as yet in its march
 Fainted and fallen and died.”¹

Such men are sensitive to the directions in which progress and destiny lie, as an artist is sensitive to beauty. They appear to have a fuller or more spacious consciousness of the world’s life than other men, in virtue of which they half anticipate, half create some step forward for which a whole community has been waiting. One aspect of this quality is described as “inspiration”—especially in the case of the poet and prophet. The inspired personality is one in whom some hidden force, idea, or impulse, becomes as it were an incandescent flame affording light to others ; he “con-

¹ Rugby Chapel.

centrates, intensifies, brings to clear consciousness, and realises more fully feelings and ideas which are active all around him,"¹ but which in him reach a higher intensity and reality than elsewhere. Such men are called by many names—they are saints, seers, prophets, poets, artists, discoverers, inventors, leaders of men. The critical study of ancient history has made it clear that, in part at least, the sacred canon originated in the collection of the sayings, writings and doings of such men, by the schools of the prophets. Cromwell's name for them in his own time was "men of the Spirit," and this with characteristic directness emphasises an important element in their common greatness; for, amidst all the difference of form and environment in which their genius works, and whatever ecclesiastical organisation may have served as a prop for their early development, biographical analysis shows that lives which appear to be different in every other respect, may have close affinities in the springs of motive which make them potent and fruitful, and that these are of the sort commonly described as spiritual, inexhaustible in their nature and illimitable in their products.

To men of this kind life owes its most living

¹ Professor Bradley.

part—the spiritual substance on which we draw for all motive, and inspiration, and guidance in ordinary life. Through them come those ideas which are forces in shaping character and society. In them the experience of other generations becomes articulate to us. “Strike out in imagination all thoughts, feelings, and ideas, which we owe to our great men, and then ask what the world would be like ; it is then apparent that the men who have this quality of genius, or inspiration, or insight, are indeed the main factors in human progress. And this is true whether their sphere be that of religion, or science, or art, or government, or commerce, or war.”¹

In the case of prophets and apostles, we find the co-operation of two factors—an external motive power and an internal activity. Something within them makes them sensitive to facts, influences, duties, of which the normal mind is either altogether unconscious or only dimly conscious. They are to the ordinary man under religious influences as the Marconi receiver is to the ordinary receiver in the telegraph office—the

¹This whole passage appears here in its true place in an order of thought. It has also been used in my introduction to *Mazzini* in the “Temple Biographies.”

ordinary receiver must have its electricity delivered by wire, the more highly sensitive receiver may be trusted to find its own current. Most of us must have our spiritual truth delivered to us in sharply defined forms, and perhaps find it hard to hold even then. But, to prophet and apostle, spiritual truth comes directly by "intuition," and becomes an authoritative spiritual deliverance. Robertson Smith said that "the perception of one original spiritual truth not delivered by tradition was enough to make a prophet."

Prophecy { If we follow the track of Hebrew history we shall be impressed by the discovery that a vivid consciousness of the presence of God (technically a theophany), is invariably connected with some turning-point in the career of the Old Testament leaders of the people of God. Moses finds God in the desert, and becomes the deliverer of his people ; he sees the glory of God, and becomes the law-giver of his people. Samuel hears God, and then all Israel knows that Samuel is to be a prophet of the Lord. Elijah finds God, and goes with his momentous message to inaugurate a new dynasty in Northern Israel. Isaiah dates his prophecy from his vision of God's holiness. Amos finds God, and becomes a prophet of righteousness. Such cases

point to *definite historical experiences*. They found something in themselves and something in the universe which had not been there before for them, and in the light of that experience they take, for themselves and their people, a step onward in bringing man's life into truer harmony with the divine will. These men themselves traced their subsequent course of action to that experience, and, though they describe it in different terms, the common element in all is a *vivid consciousness of God's presence*.

The point to notice is, that in finding God these men find themselves—become, that is, what makes them significant in history. They are larger men, their lives are established on a truer and broader basis, and reach out towards more significant realities from the moment they discover themselves to be in relation to a spiritual presence of life.

It is equally true that such men not only find themselves, but also understand the world better, read its meaning for themselves and for the men of their time with more perception of reality, in consequence of their experience. It is as though, *feeling about in a dimly lighted room, they had seen for a few moments the illumination of a flash of lightning, when everything was vivid, distinct,*

and clear ; after that, although the light faded again, they knew where they were, forms and shapes which had been dim, mysterious, and doubtful, had become solid and well-understood realities by which they could steer their course. It is in the light of Moses' experience in the mount that he becomes the lawgiver of his people, interprets for them great truths of moral life on which society must rest, and sees that those truths themselves rest on the Yea and Nay graven into the universe, the moral law which expresses the will of God. In the same way, the ultimate content of Isaiah's prophecy is not this message or that, but the fact that because the universe is spiritual and moral as well as material, Israel must shape its policies by spiritual facts and rest on spiritual forces. The eternal Yea and Nay are graven into the nature of things, and there can be no peace for Israel except in conforming to him. Isaiah has seen the Lord in a face to face presentment in which the spirit of man has come to know the spirit of the Eternal ; he has seen that holiness is the Divine nature, and that only by righteousness can men keep in harmony with Him ; and it is this truth which he interprets in a score of ways in its bearings on the circumstances of his time.

§ 17.

*Biblical
criticism*

This gives a useful standpoint for estimating the Biblical criticism of which our time has made so much. When people discuss Biblical criticism we have a right to ask, whose criticism? Is it the criticism of a mind which recognises the possibility of spiritual experience? As a record of historical facts the Bible must be compared with other historical facts; as historical literature it must be compared with other historical literature. But as the literature of faith in God and of God's response to faith it is unique and solitary. No criticism is worth anything in this sphere which is not believing criticism. Anyone is welcome to deal with the records who comes not to destroy but to fulfil; an old interpretation may be set aside by a larger and better one; but we have no right to yield to mere negative criticism which owns no obligation to faith, and is not so much the criticism of the Bible as the destruction of the edifice of faith in God. We have a right to require from destructive critics their passports before they rush in where angel hosts have trod. Much Biblical criticism at present, is carried on by persons whose views of life have been acquired in

suburbs and common rooms, and it rests on canons which would make the actual happenings of history impossible. Many of the events, for instance, which are the occasions of the prophecies of Isaiah—or for which these prophecies prepare—could be told in a few lines by a prosaic historian. They might be summarised in as many words as mere items of news. What Isaiah gives us is an interpretation of the event seen in the light of God, as an incident in the Divine dealing with Israel; it is an event read in the light of the Divine ways in the past; or interpreted by love and faith in the present; and the interpretation is alive with all the passion and hope, throbs with all the heart searchings and sympathies, of a mind sensitive to the subtle leadings of the Spirit of God.

§ 18.

It is one of the incomparable merits of the Bible, that it preserves for us traces of the development of the religious consciousness in the race which of all the races of antiquity, was chosen for its special sensitiveness on the religious side. There is nothing in history more wonderful than the way in which the Hebrew people were

taken, as it were, by the hand of God and shut up on the hill tops of Canaan ; isolated from the turbulent streams of contemporary history, yet sufficiently in touch with them to be compelled to notice their trend and direction ; prevented from stagnation by the passing of great events before their eyes ; and yet sufficiently aloof from these events to enable the religious consciousness to assimilate them and interpret them as the judgments of God.

Before the coming of Christ, the religious consciousness of Israel may be said to have contained the yield of spiritual truth from the whole experience of man up to that time. Assyria and Egypt, Babylon and Persia, had contributed their quota to the result ; but it was in Israel that men were found to whom the consciousness of God and the spiritual order, and the consciousness of humanity and the natural order were so distinct that they could see the relations between the two. The contents of that consciousness before the coming of Christ might be roughly identified in the following way :

It contains the working of the God-consciousness in the presence of nature. In the book of Genesis, in many of the Psalms, in the book of Job, and in

certain great passages in the Prophets, we have the vision of nature as seen in the light of the God-consciousness. These passages are full of the sense of man's dependence and God's power. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance : behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." . . . "To whom then will ye liken God ? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him ?"¹ They are full of the sense that nature is an effect, that the Unseen Power is the cause. The spiritual is the reality behind the material, and the material is contingent and derivative. "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number ; He calleth them all by name." . . . "Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard, the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? there is no searching of His understanding."² They reason from the magnificence of the creation to the majesty of the Creator ; and they are, as in Psalm cxxxix. deeply conscious that there is no portion of the material universe where the spiritual presence may not be found. They witness to the consciousness that there is no

¹ Isaiah lx.² Isaiah lx.

help for the spirit in material things, even the greatest. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. Whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth,"¹ these words are often quoted as though the help came from the hills, though the purpose of the Psalmist was to express quite another feeling, that even the hills were no use to him when he needed the strength of the Spirit.

The religious mind of Israel contains also the *operations of the God-consciousness on facts of history.* It is made up of events and the religious interpretation of events. A large part of its wealth, from the time of Joshua to the time of David, and, to a lesser extent, after David, consisted in interpretations of the deliverance from Egypt—they found in it a revelation of the Divine purpose, a revelation of the Divine mercy, a pledge of the redemptive power of God, of His willingness to answer prayer, and His intention to make His people free. It was to them the establishment of a covenant between God and His people, and a pledge that He would fulfil His part in the covenant. They read the single fact in the light of all that led to it and followed from it. The extra-

¹ Psalm cxxi.

ordinary power and spiritual efficacy of the Prophets arises very largely from their ability to interpret facts of history in the light of the God-consciousness. In that light the larger purposes of history, which take so long to work out, are brought into evidence ; the moral issues in contemporary events are thrown into vivid relief ; and the ethical significance of Israel's history is preserved for the benefit of the whole world.

It is also right to note that the God-consciousness in different periods of Israel's history, led to different interpretations of past events. It is clear that the interpretation of contemporary events before the fall of Samaria by religious minds in Northern Israel, was very different from the interpretation of events by religious minds in the kingdom of Judah after the fall of Samaria. Indeed, it is one of the most remarkable testimonies to the indomitable strength of the religious consciousness in Israel, that no failure of prophecy, no national disaster, either quenched it or daunted it. Even the destruction of Jerusalem, the uprooting of the nation and its exile in a foreign land, which the inspired men of one generation had regarded as impossible, could be, and were, interpreted as part of the Divine purpose and turned to good

account as contributions to the knowledge of God's ways with men.

The God-consciousness in Israel was constantly employed on questions of personal life and conduct. It turned inward and interpreted all actions in the light of their effect on that consciousness. The religious consciousness in all generations has found its ultimate expression in some of the Psalms. The language of confession, of penitence, of alienation, of reconciliation, and of the soul's thirst after God and joy in finding Him, all find their first and most characteristic expressions in the Psalms. They interpret for us the inward and subjective influence of personal actions and their effects on the soul's relation to God.

(c)
Psalms

The God-consciousness turned outward and watched the effect of ethical and moral principles at work in other men's lives, with results which are preserved for us in proverbs and other wisdom literature, full of acute observation as to the moral sequences of conduct, and of the ethical significance of man's ways and doings.

It also leaped forward to a future bright with the promises of God, and pictured a Messianic reign in which every religious good was to be realised.

This is the setting to which the life of Jesus Christ belongs. He is born into a race which has been the mouth-piece of the consciousness of God for generations. His life and character must be interpreted by that consciousness. He is the final utterance of the implanted Word. He belongs not so much to the history of the people as to the history of the revelation that came through the people. He comes to a historic consciousness formed by generations of God-conscious men. He knows that His sayings and doings will be interpreted by that consciousness, and definitely links Himself with it as the expected Messiah.

The coming of Christ, His life, death and rising, produced a permanent alteration and enlargement in the religious consciousness which had inherited the traditions of Hebrew history. Without losing hold upon the old notes, others deeper, more penetrating, and more spiritual came into being. In the new Israel which arose in the Christian Church the earlier sense of God as present in His creation is retained ; the sense of the spiritual as the reality behind the material, and the material as contingent and derived, remains ; God is Creator and Father of all, in whom all life lives and moves and has its

being ; but also God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. In Christ the pleroma or full complement of all spiritual quality is present. His life reveals the same quality of being as that which calls out the God-consciousness when it is found elsewhere. The recognition of the Father and the Son enables the Christian to differentiate from both the action of the Divine Spirit in his own life. His experience of a quickened and renewed nature he explains as the presence of the Holy Spirit in himself ; and this Spirit working within him is of the same quality of being as the Spirit revealed in the Father and the Son. Each has an effect on the Christian personality, and creates a type of consciousness which reflects its source. Spirit acting, as it were, from each of these three centres in turn, calls out the recognition of spirit in the others, in the Son witnessing to the glory of the Father, and the Spirit within revealing new light both in the Son and the Father. The full development of the God-consciousness in the Christian is only found where the action and interaction of these spiritual powers is effective.

§ 19.

An event is more than an idea. If Revelation is experience, not statement, it will be manifest in events even more than ideas. The idea is an abstraction from the event; the event is an idea which has clothed itself with reality. Christianity is a historical religion. Its creed is an interpretation of the meaning of events. It is meant to create men who create events. It weakens the claim to dissipate its substance into a series of ideas, or general truths. It is not like Swedenborg's "visions," a dealing with the unseen by means of spiritual vision only. There are visions in the Bible, but they are not the pillars on which our faith rests. The vision which runs like a connecting thread through its pages, the vision of a Messiah, is a vision which is finally and marvelously incarnated in a life.

History is a record of facts, events, but neither in our own time nor any other can it be a record of bare facts, unconnected, like dots casually put down on a sheet of paper. We know that events are intimately connected with one another; that causes have effects, that effects issue from causes. We know that there are subtle relations of

attraction and repulsion which cause events in our own time, and the more closely we look at history the more sure we are that there were also such subtle causes and effects in other days. The old astronomers fitted the stars into constellations because they could not think of them as separate; the modern astronomer determines their relation to one another by the laws of gravitation and the like. By a God-given necessity we constantly seek connection between events of history. One man writes a history of Liberty, another a history of Rationalism, another a history of Morals, another a history of the Church of Christ. The same facts may appear in all these, but in different relations.

When we affirm that we find God in history we affirm the largest connection between events. This is the largest generalisation of all. Believing in God as a supreme and holy will, a real power, a moral purpose, we say that events reveal a will loving righteousness and hating iniquity, directing all events in the patience of love, so that they may at last vindicate what He cares for most. He has a goal in view, and although with Him a thousand years are as one day, yet with Him a watchful care for the kingdom of God and the establishment of its righteousness is continually found.

That God is in history is a larger affirmation than that God is in a particular history. The greater includes the less. The man of faith will find God in the history of his own land when once his eye has been trained by watching the ways of God in Israel. If God is in all history, there is no difficulty in recognising that He is revealed in a particular course of events and biographies which we find in the Bible. The Bible is a revelation of the One Eternal God, and it is a revelation of God in a particular series of events recorded in the Old and New Testaments. It is the unique character of the claim of the prophets that the God who is revealed in their history is spiritual, holy, universal: that whether He deals with Israel, or Damascus, or Assyria, or Edom, He cares more for righteousness than prosperity; for mercy, truth, charity, justice, than for ritual, sacrifice, privilege of birth or office; that He knows no respect of persons, but has a supreme regard for the vindication of holy ends. Evil is compelled to scavenge itself out of existence: good is knitted into the structure of worlds to be. We do not say casually "the Word became flesh." We look at the long history of the "Word": we find an historical revelation of God, culminating in Jesus Christ.

We do not assume that God arbitrarily interposes in the history of Jesus: we maintain that having chosen Israel from the beginning in order that He might reveal Himself, and redeem mankind, He could not finish His work without sending forth a Christ to consummate His dealing with man. We believe that in Jesus the intended Christ is uniquely present; that in a special sense His life is an act of the spiritual God: but we see Him in the line of prophets, priests, and kings who had gone before Him and made ready for His coming. We say *Deus locutus est nobis in filio*; and it is in events that He has spoken to us,—by a birth, a life among men, a death, a resurrection, which reveal God mightier than death, and man secure in trusting Him. The events are the Word in which we trust. When we speak of God's love to man, we are not advocating what seems the most beautiful of theories. We base our message on God's own act in history in giving such a Christ.

An important consequence of this is that we may expect to find an experience of God in our lives and our own national history; not indeed in the same measure, yet after the same manner as in Israel's of old. The same instinct which demands a religious interpretation of Jesus, and an explanation of the

Cross honouring to God, gives a religious view of my own country's history. Deeply as I value Israel's history, my interest is not less real in England. It is my home; I trust it will be my children's. All the story of its struggles, its heroes, its battles, its parliaments, is dear to me. I love its people. I believe in their future. I tremblingly hope, but really hope that in some special sense God has a great work for this people to do in the world in bringing in His kingdom. At any time a new coming of Christ may usher in a movement *into* a newly-realised kingdom of God. When I remember the way He has brought us from the dim confused conflicts of Saxon days, the men He has given us: our Alfred, and Edward, and Wiclif, and Shakespeare, and Milton, and Cromwell, our Wesley and Whitefield, and Carey and Livingstone, and Pitt and Nelson, Bunyan and Burke, and Tennyson and Browning, and our great line of apostolic missionaries, I feel that we ought to have Psalms like those of Israel telling of God's goodness, with a refrain: "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" I want Psalms like 105th and 106th to tell of our battles and marches and deliverances at sea, the Armada and Trafalgar and the conquest of India. And I want an

eleventh of Hebrews to tell of the great company of preachers, orators, missionaries, teachers, who have first trusted themselves to God's love, and then gone out to be messengers of that love to others. One chapter would not do; we should want a whole epistle.

§ 20.

To the mind of faith the valid fact in the history of religions is that revelation, incipient or partial, lies at the root of them all. The substance of revelation, whatever its accidents may be, is always God himself in His relation to man. What is revealed is not doctrines or abstract truths but relations to the spiritual kingdom, experiences of dependence, of inspiration, of illumination, of purification, of condemnation, forgiveness, or atonement, of help, of deliverance, of rest, of peace, of power, of joy, of communion. The relations are partially or imperfectly expressed in many religions, they are subject to infinite variation and misunderstanding; they may be misinterpreted in more ways than the most sacred and intimate of human relationships, but they are all inarticulately or effectively striving to express man's relation to God and God's to man. This is what the founders of religions

have dealt with as the essential part of their message.

§ 21.

India is in a special sense the land of religion. The history of Hinduism covers almost every phase of religion except the highest. In its thirty centuries of history it has had time to try many experiments and find whither they lead. This makes it an ideal sphere for the critico-historical method. The whole pendulum movement of the human mind within the sphere of religion, from metaphysics to ritualism, and from ethics to mysticism, is illustrated in the history of Hinduism. In its earliest period we stand with our Aryan forefathers awed into reverence before the wonder-working powers of nature, rejoicing in the majesty of the Creator, and in the privilege of living among the works of His hands.

Their poems rise to a level which is properly described as inspired, in the sense that in them we recognise that God has spoken to and in the poet. Then thought begins, observation, introspection, dealing not with the original influences from which religion sprang, but with the thought of men about these influences. A thousand years of re-

ligious speculation on man's relation to the universe leave us with the logical theory of Upanishadic Pantheism.

“Brahma in sooth is this All. It hath therein its beginning, end, and breath : so one should worship it in stillness. Made of mind, bodied of breath, revealed in radiance, true of purpose, ethereal of soul, all working, all loving, all smelling, all tasting, grasping this All, speaking naught, heeding naught, this my self within my heart is tinier than a rice corn or a barley corn, or a mustard seed, or a canary seed, or the pulp of a canary seed. This my Self within my heart is greater than earth, greater than sky, greater than heaven, greater than these worlds . . . this is Brahma, to Him shall I win in going hence. He that hath this thought hath no doubt.”¹

The process of abstract meditation can go no further and do no more ; and it is significant to mark whither it led. In proportion as metaphysical theory was elaborated, personal worship diminished. The Absolute absorbed thought but ceased to excite worship or influence action. No one was better or worse for knowing of the existence of

¹ *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, iii. § 14, quoted in Barnet's *Hinduism*, p. 15.

Brahma. Brahmanic Pantheism accounts for evil as naturally as for good, and makes it harder to remove by setting a Divine stamp upon it. The esoteric theory ceased to serve the purpose of a religion for the people, and religion became the otiose secret of a superior and exclusive class. By way of compensating the people for the loss of direct access to a purposeful God, an elaborate system of ritualism was developed. As the worshipper could not personally deal with God, and as God could not individually help him, he was taught to be satisfied with a share in a general ritual determined by traditional and accidental circumstances. Brahmanism is a finished illustration of what intellectualism can make of religion, how it freezes its life-blood, destroys its moral significance, deprives it of redemptive power, transforms it into a sanctified naturalism.

The refinement of Brahmanic theory provoked a reaction in a direction the direct opposite of itself. When religion becomes pantheistic, theoretic, philosophic, offering no real help in the battle of life, the mind turns elsewhere for help. Finding no help in God it turns back on the resources of human nature, and systems arise such as Buddhism and Jainism—one pessimistic,

ethical, and ascetic in type ; the other mystical and quietist. The moral side of these systems is so much superior to Brahmanism, that nothing could have stayed their progress or prevented their victory, had they been religious. They failed because they were deficient in the crucial point. Brahmanism with all its defects had something to say about God. The ethicists had not.

The limitations which Buddhism embodied in its programme show themselves in its history. The object of Siddhartha is explicitly stated, and is in harmony with the whole character of the historic narrative. He surrendered his place in his father's palace and sought the woods in meditation, in order to find a way of salvation from the blight, misery, and suffering which rest on human life. In disease and suffering, in the transitory nature of human joys, and in death, he saw nothing but evil. The only good was to escape from them. It is from these that he seeks a way of salvation.

This purpose governs the answer which he gives to the problem of life. After six years in the forest and the conflict with Mara's host of sins, the four noble truths open a way of salvation, not from evil but from existence itself.

They declare that: (1) In all existence there is sorrow; (or perhaps individual or separate existence is a misery). (2) The cause of existence (or of individual life) is desire. (3) The extinction of desire is the only escape from life. Thus Nirvana, or the extinction of desire, is salvation. (4) Nirvana, or the extinction of desire, is reached by the eight-fold path of self-denial. Furnished with these truths Buddha sent forth his disciples to proclaim them as a way of salvation. His offer was to liberate men from a bondage; to rescue them from *evil*; but the evil from which he rescues them proves to be existence itself. He cures the disease by killing the patient. The solution is too simple — and abrupt — to bear serious examination. On the moral side it successfully saves men from many sins of commission, but it comprehensively enjoins most of the sins of omission. Love, philanthropy, hope, the practical applications of faith in the sphere of grappling with evil are neglected, and indeed become impossible in the measure of the Buddhist adhesion to his own religious type.

§ 22.

In Confucianism the dominant note is ethical, Confucius himself being a moralist rather than a founder of religion. The religious elements in his system were survivals permitted to remain on sufferance rather than elements introduced by him. "The master never spoke of abnormalities nor of spirits." When he was challenged by a question, his reply was "reverence the spirits, but keep aloof from them." This feature of Confucianism gives a peculiar interest to the religious history of China, and especially to the rivalries, attractions and reactions of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. The final pre-dominance of Confucianism with its ideals of the perfect man, the perfect family, and the perfect state, is a triumph of ethics. But though Confucius rejects the supernatural as an aid to salvation, his aim is to rescue men from the ills of human life by their inherent virtue. His rejection of the supernatural was, indeed, in keeping with this main object, for the supernatural was, as China knew it, mainly demonic. Agnosticism was recommended as a cure for the fear of demons, and ancestor-worship as a

substitute for demon-worship. Men were to strengthen their hearts against malevolent supernatural powers. The conception of a beneficent supernatural was as much beyond Confucius as it was native and original in Jesus Christ.

The exclusive ethical note in Confucianism seems to make it an exception among the religions of the world. But its history supplies what is wanting in the intention of the founder. The Chinese mind accepted Confucius, but has shown that it cannot be satisfied to move within his limits. His indifference to the spirit-world has not prevented, nor even affected the worship of spirits in forty million Chinese homes. The hunger for the supernatural which Confucianism refused to satisfy, has found satisfaction in the preservation of ancient religious ceremonies, such as the annual sacrifice and prayer at the Altar of Heaven, familiar domestic religious rites in the transformation of Buddhism, and in the mystical creed of Taoism. Buddhism in northern China was only able to secure its nominal hold on the people by a transformation of its nature. It accommodated itself to the mental habits of the northern peoples, satisfied their demand for a ritual, took up into itself local superstitions

and beliefs, and absorbed local religious practices by a process which finds a close parallel in the record of the spread of Roman Catholicism over Western Europe, a conquest in which the spoils of victory went to the victors in name, but to the vanquished in substance. The result in China was the whole world of difference which separates the Mahayana or Great Conveyance (High Church) of China, Korea and Japan, and the Hinayana or Small Conveyance (Low Church) of Burma and Siam and Ceylon. The severe asceticism of the Low Church gives place to the magic and ritualism of the High Church. The doctrine of Karma or moral retribution is set aside by the Goddess of Mercy, whose pity can save all. Nirvana is exchanged for a Western paradise of beauty and happiness, whither the souls of the faithful are borne after death. Buddha and his Bodisattwas, or disciples, are practically worshipped in Buddhist temples. Instead of the eight-fold path of self-denial, the turning of prayer wheels and the repetition of the sacred names of Buddha become the way of salvation. Alongside this transformed Buddhism the native supernaturalism of the Chinese mind found room for another supernatural system in

Taoism. In its books Taoism is a metaphysical mysticism, but popularly it has lived as a system of supernatural magic and a science of demonology.

§ 23.

Mohammed's problem was a relatively simple one and the elements which meet in his solution correspondingly less complex. The impulse which set his mind at work was idolatry, and the evils attendant on it, among his countrymen. At the back of his mind were the traditions of an earlier and purer religion, the religion, as he called it, of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus.¹ Monotheism which later became a self-subsistent passion was proclaimed at first as a means of deliverance from the mischief of idolatry rather than as an end in itself.

Mohammed is accordingly a long step nearer to the ideal of religion ; his is a religion resting on a revelation, an impartation of God's will to man, and his way of salvation is by supernatural aid. It is salvation by the aid of one God whose will and promise is revealed. When at the end of three years' preparation Mohammed's

¹ *Koran*, c. 11, p. 15, Sale.

mission was published to a company of his relations, the offer which he linked with his religion was a practical one. "I know no man in all Arabia who can offer his kindred a more excellent thing than I now do to you. I offer you happiness, both in this life and in that which is to come. God Almighty hath commanded me to call you unto Him ; who therefore among you will be assisting to me therein and become my brother and my vice-gerent?" (Sale's *Koran*, p. 31). This is clearly an offer of a way of salvation. It turns the flank of the evil of the world by the tremendous optimism of faith. It offers a salvation which is indeed impoverished and attenuated to happiness, but it is still salvation conceived as happiness in this world and the next. And this is to be the effect of adhesion to Mohammed and his teaching. The problem and its solution are clearly correlative. Mohammed's mind was essentially simple. His character is more complex, but the simplicity of his mind was his strength ; he saw real evils gathering about his countrymen from the complications of idolatrous worships, and as far as he went his solution was valid. The worship of one God is deliverance from the corruptions of idolatry. Monotheism is a step in the liberation of the race

from spiritual bondage. And to this day a Moslem has the vindication of a good conscience and the seal of experience when he urges an unbeliever to accept his faith. Islam was a step upwards, though it left the greater part of the journey still to be travelled.

§ 24.

Our excursions by the sea of religious truth have enabled us to look at it as one may walk round a land-circled bay, viewing it from different standpoints. We have looked at the two sides of the religious relationship—man and God—in the light of new facts present to the mind of our time. We have caught some sudden side-lights, and seen some bright and broad vistas. In the growing light the twentieth century has ceased to talk about the “melancholy, long, withdrawing roar” of the tide of faith. We find it not an ebbing but an incoming tide. It opens to us a developing power. Our knowledge of it is a growing science; our experience of it an unexhausted resource.

We find man endowed with a nature which fits him to enter into fuller relations with God.

→ It is the glory of man to be *capax Dei*, capable

of receiving God. That capacity is still to be realised and tested to the full.

We find God so revealing Himself in history that we may expect continuous revelation in days to come. It is His nature and character to make Himself known in acts of mercy and judgment, as men are found susceptible to mercy or requiring judgment.

The historic meeting-point of human inspiration and divine revelation is Jesus Christ. He holds the key to the developing relation, so that the pathway to the mount of inspiration is opened when we walk with Him, and the mystery of revelation is unveiled in Him. The religious destiny of the world is wrapped up with a true and worthy appreciation of what He was and is, and a right attitude towards Him.

PART III

THE GOSPEL IS JESUS CHRIST

§ 25.

THE Gospel, which is the distinctive contribution of Christianity to the world's history, is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Gospel. It is not His teaching alone, though that is full of glad tidings ; it is not His death alone for the sin of the world, though His death, as the means of man's reconciliation with God, is included in the Gospel ; it is not even His rising again, though by it life and immortality are brought to light ; His teaching and His cross and His resurrection find their ground and explanation in what He was—they are the exposition or unfolding of His personality. The new fact, which is itself both “God’s-spell,” the Divine word to and in humanity, and the “good news” to men, is that, within the limits of the great human family, there has been one life,

one personality, in whom the perfect relation of humanity to God has been achieved, and the eternal character and inner nature of God revealed. In Jesus, God, the unseen ever-present factor in the history of the universe, enters into possession of humanity and reveals His true character in the relations of human life ; and, equally, humanity, or man's nature, enters into possession of the powers and freedom of eternal spirit. The Gospel is thus not a form of words, nor a doctrine, nor a scheme of reforms for this world or truths about the next ; but a person, a fact out of which and the interpretations of it, all these legitimately come.

When it is said that Jesus Christ is the Gospel three things are affirmed ;—of which the first is that the Christian religion arose from a historical person. Jesus Christ is a fact in history which has to be reckoned with. His life has a date and place in time—the latter half of the 8th century of the Roman period. He stands in close relation to a historic people—the Hebrew race. Their history is necessary to understand His, and His history is part of theirs. His life has geographical and topographical associations. It is lived within the confines of Palestine in Syria ; the place of His

4 death is Jerusalem, and Jerusalem at that time was a minor city in the Roman province of Syria, and was under the government of the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate. The tragedy of His death happened while Tiberius was on the throne of the Empire. The beginning of the Christian religion rests on the hardest bed-rock of historical fact. The sequence of that beginning—the events which flow from His life—is part of the subsequent history of the world. These events can neither be ignored, nor denied, nor minimised by any historian with an eye for the movement and development of human life in history.

2, The second affirmation implied in the statement that Jesus Christ is the Gospel, is that the historical person, Jesus Christ, is universal in His significance for the destiny of man. The facts of His life and death are glad tidings for all mankind. They create a new standard of human hope and possibility. Although He is Himself a historical person, limited by conditions of His time, He achieved a universal personality—an absolute consciousness of God and man and the relations between them. He lives as Son of Man, rejecting deliberately all that would prevent Him from realising the essential life of humanity,

identifying Himself with the poverty and suffering and loss of human life, refusing to achieve His ends by non-human means. What He was to achieve for men, He would do through man. He rested His work for mankind on the law of human solidarity which entered so deeply into His own consciousness of humanity, and on which He relied both in His teaching and action. The name which He chose for Himself—"Son of Man"—indicates at least this.

There is, unfortunately, no single expression in English which covers the whole meaning of the French *solidaire*; and the absence of a completely descriptive word is an indication that a great deal of Anglo-Saxon thinking, strong in its individuality and independence, has failed to perceive the existence of a law without which history is an unintelligible riddle. The word means not only "conjointly liable" and "mutually responsible," as the dictionaries say, but it also includes what the French call *réversibilité*—that is, the conception that the action of each reverts on all, and the action of all on each. The work of Jesus Christ as a historical person, requires the fullest application of this idea if it is to be understood and His place in history explained. What He does, He

solidaire

1.

does once for all and for all men: if He achieves obedience to the will of God, it is the ideal human obedience which, once achieved is achieved for all; if He suffers, it is because it became the Captain of our salvation to be made perfect through suffering; if He enters into perfect relations to the Invisible Father of Spirits, it is the achievement of one person which is to function afresh in the hearts of all humanity; if He enters into a complete consciousness of man's relations to man, it is that that consciousness may be reproduced indefinitely to the end of time; if He achieves a perfect love for all, including the sinful and the lost, it is that all may achieve a perfect love through Him. He has entered into relations with God and with man which transcend time, and therefore dominate it. His person, though historical and real, is also universal—it contains within itself both the history and the meaning of mankind in relation to God.

Here, then, we have the record of a unique and final achievement which opens a new era for humanity. The historical person was something, and did something, which made the world a new world to man after His time. Himself limited by date and place, He became universal by entering

into relations with God and man which transcend time. His gift to the world is Himself—His personality as He achieved it, His consciousness of God, His consciousness of the Divine order which He called the Kingdom of God, as the true order of the world ; His consciousness of man, man's need, his sorrow, his sin, his need of redemption and of the power that is able to redeem ; His willingness to surrender Himself to become the agent of that redemptive necessity and redeeming power ; His continual surrender of Himself to the Father's holy will even unto death ; His perception of the spiritual certainties as to the future, and the achievement of those certainties in the emancipation of His glorified personality after death. It is an element in the unique glory of Jesus Christ that He gave Himself to the achievement of a completed human personality—complete alike in its relations to God, to the spiritual order, to the natural order of the universe, and to man ; and that He saw that to achieve personality in this complete sense, was the greatest of all possible gifts to the world—greater than any act or the utterance of any truth, or the achievement of any work of art, which the mind of man could conceive ; greater because out of the completed

} personality all other achievements come, as the stream from a fountain. The attempts which have been made through centuries of history, to define, discriminate, and discern the sources of that personality have been necessary in order that nothing of its significance should be lost ; but, as far as the real appreciation of its value is concerned, they may almost be regarded as irrelevant distractions. The important thing for the life and destiny of the world, is not to know how this personality originated, but to see what it was when it was achieved ; to feel its creative, wonder-working and compelling power ; to see how it completes, explains, and illuminates the universe itself ; how it functions afresh in creating like-minded persons in every generation.

3, The third affirmation implied in the statement that Jesus Christ is the Gospel, is that the Gospel is never itself when separated from Jesus Christ. It is not exhausted or expressed in any lower form of statement ; it is not a form of words, nor a doctrine, nor an abstract truth. The person of Jesus Christ, which is the source for those who believe in Him of the laws and inspirations of spiritual life, is greater than any of them. He is an inexhaustible spring of truth. All

symbols and doctrines are in place in religion when they take us into the presence of the person of Christ ; they are invalid as soon as they come between us and Him.

It is important to emphasise the truth that the Gospel is the person of Jesus Christ, and all that comes out of that person and reveals its nature, because the gospel of a person is a gospel to persons. A gospel which requires nothing less than a whole personality to achieve it and create it, cannot be satisfied with anything less than the creation of like-minded persons as a result ; and we rightly resent any limitation which makes the aim of Jesus Christ less than this. The difference between truth and falsehood in religion is a matter of emphasis, and an obvious truth of this kind is constantly in danger of being overlaid by considerations of policy and convenience, and for the sake of accommodation to the special circumstances of a period. One church prides itself on its historic continuity, another on its consistent adhesion to the necessity of conversion, another on its preservation of primitive forms of ritual, another on the intellectual consistency of its creed ; but the perennial demand on all forms of church life is a determination to bring each human life under the

full and radiant power of the personality of Christ—so to melt down, as it were, the limitations of every lesser personality as to mould it afresh in the new and higher type.

In the desire to honour our Lord and secure beyond all dispute His divinity, orthodox Christian thought has become almost incurably docetic. In insisting that the person of Jesus Christ is divine and human, it has forgotten that He was divinely human; it has conceived Him as God and man, instead of as humanity living in God and God manifest in humanity. If the two elements in His nature, as they are called, are separated at all, it is inevitable that the Deity swallows up the humanity. Jesus then ceases to be human and becomes merely an impressive manifestation of eternal truths. But this is to miss the whole point of a Gospel whose aim was, as S. Paul described it, *to create a new humanity, of which Jesus was the second Adam*. The humanity of the Christ is to be insisted on, not because Jesus was like the rest of humanity, but because the rest of humanity is to be made like Jesus Christ.

The method He chose to achieve the end in view, is to create in human persons a type of consciousness like His own. If we may venture to

put into modern phraseology a description of His method, it might be stated thus. He saw the immense and unexplored resources of human personality—its plasticity and elasticity, its power of development and possibilities of expansion. He knew also the unrestricted and limitless goodness of God. He knew what was in man, and saw in him an infinite possibility of entering into conscious relations with his human and spiritual environment, which as yet He had never realised; He saw that it was possible for man, as man, to enter into relations like His own—to be son-like towards the Father, brother-like towards all mankind, God-like in his voluntary acceptance and use of the order of the universe; and He knew that, as man entered into such relations, there would grow out of them a type of consciousness which would reproduce in other circumstances, times and relations, His own.

§ 26.

For the religious mind every system of thought is tried by the question—What does it make of Jesus Christ? does it give to Him the place which He really occupies in the history of mankind? is it adequate to account for the centrality,

the supremacy, of His place in history and the effect He has actually produced on the race?

It is one of the merits of the larger outlook given by Comparative religion that it brings into strong relief the incidents in the historic life of Jesus which make it supremely important to religion. It distracts attention from critical discussions which are relatively trifling ; from dogmatic discussions which obscure the mediating Personality of Jesus ; and from purely historic considerations which have the disadvantage of dealing with only one side of a life which can only be properly dealt with as a unity.

→ The first great discovery which the Evangelists had to communicate to the world was the nature of the Lord's Christ. Israel had carried in its heart for centuries a belief and an expectation—a belief that God who had spoken mysteriously and mystically in saints and prophets would make Himself known, fully and adequately. No logical reconciliation was possible between all the elements of that expectation ; but with all its diverse elements the expectation filled Israel's horizon. This is why the New Testament begins by grafting its narrative into the genealogies and quoted texts of the Old.

good

The valid conclusion from the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke is that some who knew Jesus in His earliest years connected the fulfilment of this expectation with Him from His birth. It was in the mind of the human environment of Jesus even before it was consciously present in His own. Mary, and Simeon, and Anna, the Shepherds and the Wise Men of the East are introduced into the narrative to give an objective character to the link between Jesus and the national expectation of a Christ to be given to Israel.

Jesus thus from His birth belongs to the history of revelation. He consummates a process which has been going on for centuries from the divine side. He is, in the strict sense of the term, an incarnation. In Him a divine movement which has been seeking expression in human life became incarnate ; it takes historic form and is actualised in word and deed.

The significance of this to religion is inexhaustible. It is a manifestation of a Divine mode of action. It means that God is a Being who does so manifest Himself historically in the life of the race. It sets a seal of tremendous import on the spiritual processes by which men become aware of

God and alive to His modes of activity. It means not only that man contains the image of God, but that the divine image can be perfected. It sets in relief the sphere of the spirit as the sphere in which God acts in man, and in which man enters into relations of trust, or obedience, or love towards God. Incarnation is, as all religions have seen, essential to a revelation of the relationship between God and man: but only in Jesus Christ is that relationship revealed in a form credible and adequate as the relation of Fatherhood and Sonship.

Birth of Jesus
Discussions about the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke are largely irrelevant to the main issue. What the world is concerned to know is, whether a historic Person embodied in Himself and discharged the functions implied in the Messianic expectation, whether his life revealed the unique Messianic relationship with God, how he fared with men, what resulted from his life, and how far this really reveals to us the God in whom we trust.

These, the all-important facts, interpret to the religious mind the meaning of its experience. The testimony of one person who credibly professes "I have found communion with the living

God established and mediated through Jesus Christ," is for this purpose worth the verdict of fifty historians on the literary evidence of the birth chapters in Matthew and Luke.

4th 200

The language of personal assertion which makes the fourth Gospel so unlike the other three becomes intelligible when we recognise in it our Lord's effort to make plain to others why He recognised in Himself *The Christ*. He found in His own consciousness characteristic features which prophets had seen in moments of vision as belonging to the perfect servant of God, and the Messianic Kingdom. We may attach a representative importance to the passage which describes the first scene in which Jesus stood before His fellow townsmen to proclaim His life's mission. The scripture which was to be fulfilled in His life was the proclamation of the prophet: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord* (Luke iv. 16-30). This is probably typical. In the first days of His public utterance He referred constantly to

next

the correspondence between His own experience and consciousness and the declarations of the Spirit of God in the Prophets.

The correspondences on which Jesus laid stress were moral and spiritual. In the years of His preparation He had become sure of His mission, because He found in Himself the fulfilment of the expectation of all who had lived in the power of the Spirit, and in consciousness of God's relation to man before Him. But such spiritual correspondences would seem to dull minds and slow hearts vague and impalpable, and not to be compared for their power of producing conviction with the identification of Ramah with Bethlehem in the passage, *A voice was heard in Ramah, Weeping and great mourning*, etc.;¹ or the accidental occurrence of the phrase, *Out of Egypt have I called my son*;² or the accidental verbal resemblance between Nazarene and Nazarite. The verbal correspondences to which Matthew resorts have become now a blemish in the record; but, to those who know how to value them, the spiritual anticipations of the prophets, and their realisation in the fulfilled spirit-life of Christ, as recorded in S. John, are still a testimony to

¹ Jer. xxxi. 15 ; Matt. ii. 18.

² Hos. xi. 1 ; Matt. ii. 15.

the truth that throughout the Old Testament the Eternal Spirit is seeking to make Himself known through minds open and sensitive to His influence. It is an added argument for the finality of the revelation in Jesus Christ that all these visions of the spiritual order, the most inadequate as well as the most complete, find a final interpretation in His life.

§ 27.

Special importance is attached by the Evangelists to the Baptism of Jesus (Matt. iii. 16, 17; Mark i. 9, 10, 11; Luke iii. 21, 22, 23; John i. 32, 33, 34). It is notable that not one of them omits an account of it. Matthew's account is probably most psychologically exact in emphasising, by the run of the narrative, the direct connection between the baptism and the temptation. What stands out in the narrative is that at a certain period of early manhood, before Jesus gave Himself to the public ministry, He was baptised by John in Jordan, and that the baptism was the occasion of an experience which has three main features: (1) The Spirit of God descends on Jesus; (2) This is accompanied by a new and definite consciousness of acceptance by God for the work of the Messiah; (3) It is

Baptism

temptation of Jesus. followed by a temptation based upon the sense of unique and exceptional relationship between Father and Son.

Comparison brings out differences. We see how unique was the temptation of Jesus when we set it beside some other recorded temptations. Compare the three following records.—A young man, the son of a king, is deeply impressed with the pain and suffering of human life, and seeks deliverance from it. He leaves his father's palace, sends back his horse, and gives himself to this one quest. He seeks the woods, and with him five companions who recognise in him a determined teacher. They live on what the forest supplies. At last his austerities are too severe for his physical frame. He swoons away, and lies as one dead. His five companions think him dead. During this time he has a conflict with temptation. As morning breaks he makes a supreme effort. He forces his mind to a strict sequence of thought, and the light he had so long sought dawned on him. He finds his message—sees through the illusions of human life, and henceforth is ready to teach all men a way of salvation from its evils.

Taken at its best and seen through Christian

eyes, the history of his conflict is admirably told in the sixth book of Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* :

The ten chief Sins came—Mara's mighty ones,
Angels of evil—Attavada first,
The Sin of Self, who in the Universe
As in a mirror sees her fond face shown,
And, crying "I," would have the world say "I,"
And all things perish so if she endure.

"If thou be'st Buddh," she said, "let others
grope

Lightless ; it is enough that Thou art Thou
Changelessly ; rise and take the bliss of gods
Who change not, heed not, strive not." But
Buddh spake,

"The right in thee is base, the wrong a curse ;
Cheat such as love themselves." Then came wan
Doubt,

He that denies—the mocking Sin—and this
Hissed in the Master's ear, "All things are shows,
And vain the knowledge of their vanity ;
Thou dost but chase the shadow of thyself ;
Rise and go hence, there is no better way
Than patient scorn, nor any help for man,
Nor any staying of his whirling wheel."

and so on to the end :

Thus "finishing the path" ; free from Earth's
cheats ;
Released from all the Skandhas of the flesh ;

Broken from ties—from Upadanas—saved
 From whirling on the Wheel; aroused and sane
 As is a man wakened from hateful dreams.
 Until—greater than Kings, than Gods more glad!—
 The aching craze to live ends, and life glides—
 Lifeless—to nameless joy,
 Blessed NIRVANA—sinless, stirless rest—
 That change which never changes!

Mohammedi Beside this set the story of a young merchant in Arabia, the husband of a rich wife, but deeply concerned by the growing idolatry of his countrymen. He feels himself called to become the prophet of the one God, and goes away to a cave in Mount Hara for a month that he may deepen his conviction of his mission and consider how to carry it out. He meets with much opposition and contradiction, but each year finds him alone in Mount Hara, and he comes out more resolute to fulfil his mission.

How unique and unlike any other the temptation of Jesus was comes out when we compare it with such records as these. Briton Riviere¹ has done what can be done for the externals of the scene. He has painted the lonely sterile wastes

¹ See also frontispiece to Prof. Sanday's *Life of Christ* and Harold Copping's *Temptation*.

round Jordan; on the horizon the rugged mountains of Moab; in the centre a lonely motionless figure on a ledge of a rock, with bent head, indicating in every line of the figure intensity of concentrated thought. The only other living thing in the scene is a gliding snake slipping away in fear. This is the external setting of the temptation. It is clear that the incident as recorded does not permit of any visible appearance. If Jesus had seen the tempter there would have been to Him no temptation. The real arena of conflict is the breast of the Son of Man. If we reverently reconstruct the nature of that conflict, its occasion stands out clearly enough. The voice that proclaims that "this is my Beloved Son," summons to the conflict. The ground of the temptation is indicated in the phrase, twice repeated—"If thou art the Son of God." The meaning of that call was to be determined; the limits of the powers conferred, and the way in which those powers were to be used, had to be decided. Luke has an expressive touch, when he brings together the two elements of the temptation, "Jesus, *full of Holy Spirit,*" was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and . . . "tempted of the devil" (Luke iv. 1). The temptation came through the awakening of

the full sense of Sonship, and the occasion when Jesus was found consciously filled with the Spirit was the opportunity of the tempter.

Through long years of silence a preparation had been going on. The years were not without growth. As the consciousness of His calling grew more clear, only the deep sense of duty made Him willingly bear family restraint and criticism, often the most unjust of all criticism. During these years it is clear that His mind worked much on His people's hope; His early utterances are in the note of the Messianic expectation. By the beginning of His public ministry He was sure that these human hopes and Divine purposes were alike concentrated in Him. He was to be "the centre of a people's hope, the pillar of a world's desire." His baptism was a public, definite, final surrender to the discharge of the great commission. He begins by the endeavour to fulfil all righteousness. The surrender was answered by the Divine approval—"Thou art my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and with this came the conviction that He had now received power to fulfil the great commission. As yet the means and the path to fulfilment were not clearly present to his mind. This was the tempter's opportunity, the reality of

the temptation lying in the fact that the Father had revealed to Him the ends, but had left the Son to choose the means. This is characteristic of all temptation. It is essentially individual and personal, and the higher the call, the more is it beset with temptation.

The form of the temptation is an endeavour to bring Jesus to use His unique relationship and special powers for purposes less worthy than that for which they were bestowed. It is some recollection of this that leads to our Lord's emphasis on the title "Son of Man." The title "Son of God" was associated with a temptation to insist on prerogative. The "Son of Man" is deliberately chosen for its insistence on function rather than prerogative.

The three temptations determine the attitude of Sonship towards the three great temptations of the religious life. The first deals with and disposes of a theory of personal conduct; the second deals with and disposes of a theory of the work of religion; and the third deals with and disposes of a theory of social action. Thrown into the form of a dialogue the alternatives might be presented thus:

"If thou art the Son of God claim thy privilege and use this privilege to free thyself from the 1.

vulgar necessity of depending on common toil and common bread. Use thy powers to ease the burden and strain of life."

good
Back comes the reply: "But I have come to be as other men, to hunger and thirst with them. What worth will life be if I fix a gulf between myself and them?"

"But if thou art the Son of God use the power that is already thine; there is no harm in satisfying hunger—with thee, God is well pleased."

"Nay, but these powers are given me for use in the service of the Kingdom of God. They are to be used for others, opening to them the love of the veiled God. My life must be in the power of obedience and demonstrate the supremacy of the spiritual kingdom. If I claim privilege I lose the right to service. The essential life of man is both physical and spiritual. Its problem is to hold them in their true order and relation. I am determined to live, not by bread alone, or for it, but for the Word that proceedeth from God."

The second temptation takes higher ground:

"Of course," the tempter urges, "it was wrong to distrust the Father; of course man does not live by bread alone, but by the Word of God. Indeed the more you trust Him, the more

remarkable will be His manifestation of Himself. Recall the tradition that the Messiah would manifest Himself on a pinnacle of the Temple. Go to the pinnacle of the Temple at the time of evening sacrifice; cast thyself down, remember the promise—"Angels shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." The reply comes back: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

There is a subtle theory of religion in the tempter's suggestion, the fanaticism which declares that God reveals Himself only in the supernatural. The idea is that the more extraordinary the thing is, the more divine it must be. If the suggestion had been accepted, the effect would have been to make the crowd stand back to see the next marvel the Messiah would accomplish.

Jesus creates for us the standard of obedient sonship by His reply—"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Religion lives by revealing the supernatural in its relation to human life. It was the special function of Jesus to reveal the naturalness of that relationship. He reveals a natural, or, rather, a normal supernatural. He makes God manifest in obedience, as well as in commanding authority, within human life, as well as above it. No man has a right to invoke the

name of Jesus Christ in order to justify Himself in defying the laws of nature. No man has a right to invoke the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to save him when he willingly neglects those laws. Though all power be His, none of it is at our service to minister to religious vanity or to be used for purposes of advertisement, or to compel men to believe in spite of themselves.

Jesus would not give to men any demonstration of His Messiahship which does not call out the action of their own faith. Will, mind, and love must all co-operate. He acts on the rule that only goodness understands goodness, only faith trusts faith, only love believes in love, morals and religion interpenetrate deeply and continuously, and the attempt to create belief on any other method is to attempt the impossible. To teach man that God was in Christ without any wish to possess Him for themselves would be nothing. To help men to see God in Christ, so that He may be in them, is everything. In religion, truth external is truth unknown, however the intellect may assent to it, but truth incorporated into life is new life.

The third temptation is the critical one for the Christian Church. It deals with a theory of social

action in the interests of the kingdom of God, and it gives insight into the nature of the kingdom of God and the methods by which it is spread. It may have been psychologically based on the Messianic expectation of the Psalmist. The passage which begins (Psalm ii. 7)—“The Lord said unto Him, ‘Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,’” goes on with “Ask of Me, and I will give thee the nations for thine own inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” This is the conviction expressed in the familiar Puritan phrase, “the saints shall possess the earth.” The truth behind it is that the spiritual mind is nearer to reality and truer to the heart of things, better able to see the meaning of life and deal with its difficulties, than any other. *truer* The spiritually illumined man sees what ought to be done and how it can be done in many lines of life. The danger is that men who find this out will assert it by illegitimate methods; they are so sure of their truth that they are willing to compromise to get it recognised.

The tempter urges, “You must go the world’s way that you may persuade the world to go yours.”

You must accept this compromise or that. Sacrifice something of your ideal for a prompt payment in cash. "It is worth a mass to win Paris," as Henry the Fourth of France put it,—forgetting that Paris was of no use to a leader of Protestants when it had been won by a mass.

The whole method must have been present to the mind of Jesus in the temptation described by Him, as "the devil taking Him into an exceeding high mountain, showing Him all the kingdoms of the world, and saying to Him, 'All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' " His reply definitely disowns the compromise which gives sovereignty and takes away power—
 { "Get thee hence, Satan ; it is written, 'thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' "

This is the victory of the spirit over the world. What force establishes, force can destroy ; what policy can create, policy can overthrow ; what worldly wisdom builds up, worldly wisdom will pull down : but the Kingdom of God in the heart of man is a kingdom imperishable, and it remains standing though empires rise and fall.

The history of the Christian Church is a continual comment on this truth. Rome, at the

maximum of its temporal power, reached the minimum of its spiritual influence, and every political Church has shared that degradation. When men grasp at power, the tempter has them in his power. He lets them get what they want on the sole condition that they shall be able to do nothing with it when they have it. They find that they are bound to carry on a course determined by the methods which have brought them influence. Their acts make a moral tradition—in Mr. Gladstone's phrase, "logical continuity and moral causation mock human effort and carry us whither we would not." The method by which power is acquired determines the ends for which it can be used. It is insight into this moral truth that prompted the old legends about men "selling themselves to the devil." The third temptation ought to secure the Christian Church for ever against the seduction of power purchased at the cost of principle.

Comparing the temptation of Jesus with the records of Mohammed and Siddartha, it becomes clear that the things which are common are less than the differences. *Solitude* as the scene of spiritual conflict *is common to all three*. The arena of conflict is the desert. The fact points to a truth

*Solitude
value*

behind itself, which twentieth-century Christianity is in some danger of forgetting. When the Spirit of God does lay hold of man, he wants to be alone. Solitude is necessary. A new factor has come into life : he wants to see how deep it goes, what its direction is to be. He wants to be far from disturbing influences. As the compass needle is deflected from its course by the presence of metal in rocks near at hand, so the soul is disturbed by other attractions ; it will not set true unless it secures isolation. The soul at the moment of its awaking to awareness of God's presence is intensely sensitive to the influences about it, and if the influences are not right, it will sometimes run into the wrong mould and harden there. The inner conflict is the making of the spiritual man.

61 *Conflict is common to all three.* The awakening of the sense of God is a time when the tempter renews his attacks on the soul—and this is inseparable from spiritual birth.

But note the unique character of the temptation of Jesus.

Buddha, by his own confession, achieved his deliverance by a process of pure intellection. His task is to achieve salvation from the physical evils

of human life, and his victory is a victory of the mind over life regarded as illusion.

Mohammed's conflict is a simple one against his own doubts and fears. But the sphere of the conflict of Jesus in the desert is as unique as His own Person. The battle He has to fight is based on His consciousness of a unique mission for which He has received unique powers. It rises out of the discovery that He is to fulfil the historic rôle and task of a Messiah, and that He has such equipment for it as has never come to any other. He has come to reveal and establish the Kingdom of God. He knows what the popular expectation of the Messiah is, and He knows that that can never be His own. The temptation is to take the way that men expect. The call is to overcome that, and fulfil His vocation in the highest sense in which the Spirit of God makes it known to Him. The battle of the soul is to see, not only the noblest ideal, and the truest, and to live for it, but also the fitting method, which will establish for ever in the minds of men the conviction of a Kingdom of God, rejecting every half measure which would lower the level of an ultimate victory.

§ 28.

The moral teaching of the Gospels rivets the attention and respect of many people who do not see the connecting link between its separate precepts. The link that connects and explains them is the link between moral integrity and spiritual development. This is a subtle and beautiful thing after which many religions have felt instinctively. It was the truth at the heart of the ancient mysteries of purification in Roman and Greek religions—the mysteries of Eleusis and the religion of Mithras which seriously challenged comparison with Christianity in the early days of the Roman Empire. The Sermon on the Mount will bear fresh study and interpretation from the standpoint of its own climax. “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” The teaching of the sermon contains much more than a sublime morality. It contains the reflection in the moral sphere of the supreme spiritual interests of the soul on which its happiness here and hereafter alike depends. The blessings are the blessings of the spirit. The prohibitions, such as the prohibition of lust (Matt. v. 27-32), are intended to preserve the spirit from mortally injuring its own being.

47. 48. 170

The commands, such as "Love your enemies," are commands intended to secure the spirit from allowing any external influence to poison its essential life. Its promises—"Ask and it shall be given you"—are only true in the sphere of the spirit, where the spirit of man deals immediately with the Spirit of God. Its warnings are against trying to live life and face death—great serious things both of them—on terms any less frank and serious than those which deal with the ultimate realities.

The witness of the miracles is that for Jesus life included forces and powers other and larger than those with which men commonly deal. His spectrum included the colours that lie beyond violet. He saw life in larger and fuller relation to God than we do, and He saw how largely and graciously the superhuman powers might touch and alleviate the common human needs.

§ 29.

It is significant that there is no important part of the Gospel which Jesus preaches and presents, which is not related directly to some permanent spiritual instinct in man. Human nature, with all its religious instincts intensified,

was what He required to work upon, and, for this reason, our Lord limited Himself to the House of Israel. But the instincts which were found in an intensified form in Israel, belong no less to the whole race of mankind, and reveal themselves in the history of all nations. We may consider as typical how Jesus appeals to the following instincts, and what His master-hand makes of them : (1) the consciousness of God ; (2) the sense of better and worse in conduct ; (3) the idealising instinct ; (4) the consciousness of sin ; (5) the altruistic instinct ; (6) the soul's consciousness of its own transcendence over time.

(1) He finds in man a consciousness of God, which has been at work since the first of our forefathers felt a sentiment of awe in the presence of the mysteries of the universe. It had already produced many aberrations—had become sometimes a slavish fear, and sometimes a wild and sensuous excitement. In Israel it had already taken nobler forms—had become a sense of dependence on an unseen power, a sense of the dignity and vastness, the unity and steadfastness of a Being who held the seas and the mountains, the clouds and the plains,

as in the hollow of His hand; a sense of relationship to a Being infinite in holiness and power. In the time of Jesus the consciousness of God had become sterile and morbid under the frigid influence and formality of a Rabbinical creed, but it was still there; and on this instinctive consciousness, born with man, an inbred testimony as it were of his spiritual nature, Jesus Christ lays hold. He interprets and explains it, and consummates its significance by teaching man that this consciousness witnesses to an invisible relationship, by which he is Son and God is Father. Such an interpretation of this instinctive consciousness changes its whole character and significance. The vague consciousness of an unknown God is so different from the filial consciousness of the Christian realised through Christ, that many have refused to see any contact or connection between the two; and have maintained that the terms sonship and fatherhood can only be used of man's relation to God, when that relation has been spiritually vivified by a second or spiritual birth. But this is to deprive the Gospel of part of its glory, and to limit its significance for all mankind. It is part of the splendour of this truth, that the father-

Sonship
cf also p.

hood of God is a truth necessary that man may understand himself—a consummation of the gropings of all who have felt after Him if haply they might find Him, a relationship which must be realised in order that man may find out the full significance of the gift of personality.

by spirit The revelation of man's relation to a Holy Spirit is equally necessary as an explanation of the actual history of religion in the world. Jesus Christ found in the history of His own people unmistakable evidence that human life had been heightened, vision quickened, truth best understood, where the pressure of the Eternal Spirit upon the spirit of man had been most consciously felt. It is clear that He quoted freely from, and meditated much on those passages from the Prophets which record their spiritual experience and its effect; such as, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor." The promise of the spirit, which was evidently emphasised with increasing frequency towards the end of His ministry, is always associated with an awakening on the part of the disciples to a fuller and more vital consciousness of God and His ways as an

Eternal Spirit immediately related to the spiritual nature of man ; and the apostolic emphasis on the gift of the Spirit is the direct outcome of the consciousness in the apostles that they had been brought into a relation to God which could only be accounted for by Divine action.

From this point of view it is seen that the connection between Calvary and Pentecost is not a mere sequence. Pentecost reveals what took place at Calvary. The surrender of the cross involves the return of man to obedience to the Father's will ; on Calvary the Son gives himself to God. Pentecost means that the atonement achieved by the Master has functioned in the disciples and is accepted ; it is God giving Himself to men.

(2) Jesus finds in man a sense of better and worse, of higher and lower, in conduct, which, under the discipline of the law, has become a sense of right and wrong. But the law which once had been the re-enforcement of this instinct, had then become its bondage. A vitalising and ascending instinct was labouring under a dead weight of traditions of the elders—like the chivalry of Don Quixote in the fantastic armour of his fathers. It had become

artificially limited in its range and application, and largely petrified by the action of custom. Jesus liberates that sense of better and worse in conduct from its fetters, He makes conscience, as it were, again an active power, by making it clear that its normal operation is not intended to secure compliance with the law of Moses or with any external authority, but always and everywhere to follow the higher of two alternative courses, or to bring man into harmony with the highest or most spiritual principle he recognises. The significance of the position in which the words occur—*Ye shall be perfect, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect*—is often missed. They stand where they do, because they are a kind of natural apex or keystone of the ideas which run through the first part of the Sermon on the Mount. The mystery of conscience lay open to the mind of Jesus in the same sense that the mystery of the compass lies open to the mind of the physicist and electrician. To the physicist the needle's habit of pointing to the pole is a natural consequence of the electrical currents in the earth. To Jesus the demand of conscience—man shall follow the upward and highest course

Text.

where he sees it—is the natural consequence of the fact that that way lies harmony and correspondence with the Divine will. It is because every act in obedience to conscience means more of eternal light and the everlasting right in the soul, that man needs must seek the highest when he sees it. In other words, conscience is germinally a consciousness of God (the words in the original are exchangeable); the consciousness of right and wrong is ultimately a consciousness of God and the things that are His, over against the consciousness of the things that are not His and lead away from Him.

(3) Jesus finds in man the instinct which declares that the existing order of things, as He knows it, is neither the best possible nor the best realisable. The operation of this instinct is practically universal in all the types of manhood which have not become mentally sterile. It takes many forms. Sometimes it is a belief in a golden age in the past, when justice and truth, peace and brotherhood, equality and love, were the recognised principles which governed the relations of men to one another. Sometimes it takes the form of a belief in a golden age in the future, when all wrongs shall be righted,

miseries relieved, evil removed, and "men to men shall brothers be the whole world o'er." More commonly, in our own day, it takes the form of a contrast between the ideal and the actual; for any mind which has not lost its elasticity is compelled to conceive human relations and a social order of a very much higher type than any of which we have actual experience. It is not difficult to see how much of human suffering is preventible, how much of the disease and want and misery of the world might be removed, if larger ideas, finer character, better feeling, and other morals were in possession of the men and women who make up existing communities.

Criticism of the actual, from the stand-point of the ideal, is becoming so common as to be almost as monotonous as the actual itself in our day. Amongst the Hebrews this instinct had taken the highest form realised by any people up to the time of Christ. It had been more continuous in its operation than elsewhere, and, thanks to the preservation of the visions of one generation to inspire the visions of the next, the conception of the ideal had continued to grow in richness and splendour and power, under the pressure of those spiritual impulses to which the Hebrew mind was peculiarly

susceptible. By the guidance which we recognise as the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the prophets had formed what is known as the Messianic Hope. The very poverty and exiguousness of the actual had compelled them, as it were, to take refuge in the ideal. An actual, which included the destruction of Jerusalem and captivity in a foreign land, was utterly irreconcilable with the consciousness of God, His character and purpose, which was already born in the nation. They were compelled to conceive a future in which the history of the nation, its inward condition and its outward relations with the world, should be more in accordance with the will and purpose of a God whose nature it was to be righteous, whose prerogative it was to be gracious, and whose fixed purpose it was to reveal Himself as both righteous and gracious, to man.

The Messianic Hope had, like everything else in Israel's history, though spiritual in its origin, become material and mechanical in the popular religion of the time of Jesus. It was part of the difficult task of our Lord to get behind the material and mechanical applications, and to liberate the spiritual instinct on which the hope rested. There is no more wonderful work of what in another we should call genius, than the way in

which Jesus Christ gets behind the formal Messianism of His time, liberates the almost obliterated spiritual instinct, and sets it to work to realise a Kingdom of God, which must be achieved by faith before it can be realised in fact. He does not deny the doctrine of the golden age, He confirms the belief that the ideal is a reproof to the actual ; but He insists that the true order of life, the better and the higher order, cannot be achieved without until it has been achieved within—it begins in the heart of man, it depends for its realisation on his first getting into true relations to God—"The Kingdom of God is within you."

Kingdom is in.

Nothing is more futile in the history of mankind than efforts to realise the Kingdom of God externally before it has been realised internally. The history of each of these efforts is the same in outline. It begins in an appeal to the idealising instinct in man, creates great enthusiasm on the strength of the expectation that the perfect social order can be realised immediately when certain external reforms have been made, and certain changes in the external relations of man rectified ; and it breaks down inevitably on the discovery that the most perfect social relations can be misused by very imperfect men. But all such expectations,

though in one sense they are encouraged by the teaching of Jesus, rest upon a misapprehension of the order of ideas in His mind as He explained them. The Kingdom of God is the ideal social order. It is the perfect individualism and the perfect socialism, the individual living for the society and the society caring for the individual. It fulfils the higher ideals of the Messianic Hope ; God being present in His servants, rules in them by the power of His spiritual life, and manifests His rule in creating those relations of justice, fidelity and brotherhood, peace, honour and truth, which are the foundations of an enduring social life. These relations are a reflection of the order into which the spirit of men has entered, coming into harmony with that love of others which is expressive of the Divine life. But there can be no Kingdom of God except in hearts which have been redeemed from sin, and restored to fellowship with the Eternal Spirit. No soul in the "gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity" can even understand what is meant by such a Kingdom. The inward vision must precede the outward realisation. The spirit within must interpret the present significance of the ideals which the spirit quickens. The "kingdom of priests, the holy nation"

cannot be realised without consecrated personalities quickened and hallowed by the Spirit's life.

Sin its seriousness. (4) Another spiritual instinct on which Jesus lays hold, is that which issues in the consciousness of sin. Pressed to its origin in human consciousness this is a consciousness of a higher and a lower will which are both present in normal human nature; together with a consciousness that in following the lower we wrong the higher. It was neither a Hebrew nor a Christian who said :

Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.

But, in the consciousness of the Hebrew, the divided personality feeling a double attraction and a double allegiance had been construed in its highest significance. The higher will within had been felt to be, as it really is, God's true will for man; and the lower will had been recognised as the assertion of a perverse self against the true law of its being. The very vividness with which the Hebrew felt his own personality had deepened his sense that, in following his selfish will, he sinned against God.

Jesus was acutely conscious, both of man's sin and its consequences. He knew that the lower will having once been accepted and obeyed, the higher will was obscured while the consciousness of the disobedience remained; so that sin became

in man a disorder which obscured vision, and prevented him both from seeing his true self and his God. His method of restoring man to God is a consequence of His sense of the greatness of the obstacle to be overcome. His own life is given that men, the sons, may be set at one with God the Father. For that He has resources which no others have. They can do nothing because the presence of sin shuts out the vision of the remedy they need. To meet the case there must be such a Gospel as shall make it possible for man to return to God with his sin rather than without it, and which will yet condemn the sin while it forgives the sinner. Indeed, sin being, as it were, in possession, must be made the sphere in which God is revealed in His justice and His mercy, instead of the thing which obscures Him. And so Christ comes to suffer, the just for the unjust. At the cost of laying down life He bears unbroken witness to the forgiving character of God. He is the Saviour whose cross is at once the condemnation of the life which is merely natural life without God, and the supreme vindication of the spiritual life or life with God. Sacrifice is always the price which must be paid when some one intervenes to make right what

admonition

→ has been wrong. Jesus Christ becomes a willing sacrifice to restore to humanity its lost sonship.

prodigal

The prodigal son returning to the Father on the basis of a confession of sin, is henceforth a better son and knows more of the Father than the elder brother whose formal compliance with the external rules of the household has never brought him into touch with the deeper things of the Father's heart. Henceforth a man who knows the meaning of God's forgiveness as Jesus Christ assures it has no interest in making himself out self-righteous; the God whom he has known as forgiving him, is so much greater, more real, and more spiritual, than the God whom he knew before his forgiveness. The higher life is content to pray "Create in me a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within me"; the lower protests "I have washed my hands in innocence."

altruism

(5) Another spiritual instinct on which Jesus lays hold, is that which is often called the instinct of altruism—the sense, that is, in each individual, of the "otherness" which is as much a part of himself as "selfishness"—the feeling that his life is inseparably wrapped up with the life of others, that he belongs to a group, a family, or a community; the instinct which, in certain crises, leads

men to disregard their own personal welfare and willingly to give service, and, if necessary, life itself, for the good of the community. Drummond has suggested that the development of that instinct may be followed throughout nature. Other writers¹ have recently strengthened some of his suggestions, and though his case is not yet proved, we may anticipate that love's beginning will be found either germinal or active wherever life exists. On this instinct Jesus Christ lays hold. He knows it in Himself as an identification of His own life with the whole human race, and He gives it some very beautiful and unexpected developments.

It is impossible to express the full meaning of His sayings about human love by anything less than the statement that Jesus Christ felt the spiritual identity of the interests of mankind. In His spiritual vision He saw humanity (including all men) as one. Hatred, wrath, anger, malice, against a brother were, so to speak, absurdities, as injuries done to one's self; the love of the brethren was the love of God in the brethren, and the love of God was the love of the brethren in whom God dwelt. To cherish a resentment, or to refuse to forgive an

¹ Cf. Drummond's *Ascent of Man*, Dr. Greville Macdonald's *The Religious Sense in its Scientific Aspect*, Wallace's *World of Life*.

injury, was to shut God out of one's own heart, and make it more difficult to believe in, or to get access to, His forgiveness of ourselves. To shut up the heart to sympathy, to refuse to feel the solidarity of man, as in the case of Dives and his treatment of Lazarus at the gate, was to create a chasm between ourselves and God, and to bar ourselves from entering into the eternal peace. God and life and love are so essentially one, that every assertion of self, to the exclusion of God who is love, was a kind of spiritual suicide. Not to enter into the one life which is life, that is, the life of love, was to shut one's self up in a material prison, and to wait there for the self-imposed penalty of death.

To get any insight into the nature of love, is to feel that we are here touching the fringe of the innermost Holy of Holies—the supreme mystery both of the Gospel and of the life of Jesus. It may well be that what we call sentiments or feelings, are reflections in the human soul of real and spiritual relations subsisting in the unseen; and that what we call love at its noblest, is the effect of a real and substantial spiritual relation subsisting between souls. Something at least as tremendous as this, seems to be implied by the

expressions used in the 17th chapter of S. John—

“I pray . . . that they that believe on Me may be one, even as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be in us . . . I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one.” It is in full conformity with the ethical judgment of life, that love should be found to be that in us which has most of the Divine nature in it. All steps Godward are accompanied with an increase of that sense of inter-relation with others which is commonly defined as altruism; and it is at least a conceivable account of the Divine life in man, that it is a progress from a life in self to a life which is completely altruistic. It is part of the miracle of personality that this does not involve the destruction of personality, but only its most complete perfection. It is the acme of personal life which is described in the words—
 “we being many are one body.”

72X1.

72X1.

Love is a key-note of the Gospel, not because it is a beautiful virtue, but because it is the reflection in human life of the spiritual unity of all eternal human interests. In the spiritual kingdom, the goods of life are, as it were, solid; whatever good thing there is, is universally shared and universally appropriable. Beauty and happiness, peace and

holiness, are not individual possessions, they are the common atmosphere, the breath of those who live in God. Just as the artist realises himself and becomes an artist in so far as he actualises what we call beauty, as the musician is not a musician except so far as he enters into and possesses the kingdom of music, so man as a spiritual being only lives and realises himself by entering into the Kingdom of God.

(6) Jesus finds in man an instinct which is, perhaps, best described as the soul's sense of its own *immortality* timelessness. It is the instinct out of which grows the belief in immortality, and is as wide-spread as humanity. In every race which has a continuous record of its own thought, this instinct has a long recorded history. Assyria and Egypt, Greece and Rome, India and China, alike bear testimony to the persistence and fruitfulness of the belief in immortality as a motive power both in thought and action. The variety of its forms ought to save us from confusing immortality with endless endurance. The soul has a testimony in itself to its transcendence over time, or its timeless life. That testimony must be regarded as a witness to the quality or intensity of life, rather than its quantity. It knows itself as endowed with a

higher kind of life than that which belongs to things which subsist only in space or time.

This instinct slowly and at intervals asserted itself in Israel, and had gradually reached sufficient definiteness to make one of the decisive beliefs which separated the Pharisees from the Sadducees. The difference between the two conceptions of the future was a matter of common discussion among the people.

The full significance of the instinct lay open to the mind of Jesus, and He saw exactly in what sense and how far the instinct was justified and was to be satisfied. To explain the nature of the life of the spirit was one of the things of which He said that His disciples "could not bear them now"; but He took pains in His teaching both to confirm the testimony of the instinct—"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were *not* so, I would have told you"—and also to explain and enforce the bearings of the eternal spiritual life on the present. His parables, such as the story of Dives and Lazarus, the householder who engages labourers at a penny a day, and all the parables of judgment, are full of suggestion as to the nature of the future life, of its relation to actions in the present life; and this is of course

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what really concerns us. We cannot conceive by any imaginative realism the nature of the existence of spirit apart from body; but we can conceive a continuity between a life which is partly physical and partly spiritual and a life which is wholly spiritual; and the important thing for this life is to see its events in the perspective which is created by this prospect. What Jesus does in His parables is not so much to unveil the life which lies behind the veil, as to show the difference which it makes to the life here—that is, He tries to give us the revised-values which come from a knowledge of all the issues involved.

What then is the bearing on human nature of such a Gospel, when it is regarded as an interpretation of the appeal of Jesus Christ? How shall we } express the human bearings of the fact of Christ as } a fact in human history. Sharing humanity, He interprets humanity. No one knows better than the scientist that it is the abnormal which often throws light on the normal; so also the super-human may help to explain the human. The relations to God, which in Jesus Christ lie in clear consciousness and are to Him as fully real as His relations to the world, are suggested in our race by obscure hints, feelings, instincts, which hardly

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understand themselves, but which feel after the Christ-relations as their true satisfaction.

It is something to the point to remember that Robert Browning, who had probably the largest consciousness of life and its significance of any man in our time, set his seal to this as his philosophy of life. He conceives of man as endowed with a soul which requires for its satisfaction a spiritual order of life. He is bound to struggle upwards by his very nature, and in obedience to a necessity of his being which he does not as yet fully comprehend.

“Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
But dream of him and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him.”

It is more to the point for the Christian mind to remember that this was the attitude which Jesus Christ Himself expected men to take. The spiritual instinct which reaches out after other and more perfect relations with the Eternal Spirit, He called faith; and this was the essential quality which He demanded from man. It is, so to speak, the God-faculty. Between faith and God there was the same correspondence as between the eye and light, or as between beauty and aesthetic perception. As the artist could do nothing with a

Robert Browning

faith

pupil who was colour-blind and had no sense of form, so Jesus could do nothing with men who had no faith. To be without faith meant that the larger soul, the spiritual possibilities of personality, had been atrophied. Men had shut themselves up in a prison-house of their own making, and all He could do was to invite them out into the open air and the sunshine. His judgment of men by the presence of faith, or the want of it, only seems hard so long as we regard faith as an accomplishment to which some can attain, and others cannot; but if we are in any measure right in suggesting that faith is the operation of something which forms a permanent part of human personality, or an operation of personality to which man is impelled by his own nature, it becomes clear that what man is responsible for is not the exercise of faith, but the want of it. The faithless man is as abnormal as the still-born child. He has refused to follow the law of his nature; he has faculties which he will not use; a life to which he denies the privilege of living. Humanity is not divided into those who have faith and those who have none; but into those who use faith and those who refuse to use it. Where it is used, it moves on until a correspondence is established between man and God in

which faith finds its justification. It is the testing of things unseen; and its justification is that, when the things unseen are tested, they bring the full satisfaction of the highest powers in our nature. text
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§ 30.

From the vantage ground offered by comparative religion, one of the outstanding points in the Gospel narrative is the Transfiguration. The life of Jesus offers a new interpretation of the relation of man to God, and of God to man. He is essentially what religion requires, a mediator interpreting two factors out of which religion springs to one another, and in that mediation undoubtedly the transfiguration occupies a central position. Transf.

We do not know by what process the eyes of the disciples were opened, but the meaning of the narrative is clear. Peter, and Andrew, James, and John saw the physical frame of Jesus transfigured from within. The spiritual body, always radiant with love, and holiness, and truth, became for the time visible, and its effect was the illumination of Jesus even to His raiment and the spot where He stood. They saw that He was in spiritual converse with Beings having form but not substance: The effect on the disciples was exceptional elation

and the sense of beatitude. Their senses were dumbfounded; they had no language for the new perceptions which had dawned on them.

The importance of such an experience for purposes of religion cannot be over-estimated. It moves the whole race of men into a sphere of relationship with God which is, on occasion, verifiable within the sphere of human experience. In working out the religious value of the incident, we should have to use suggestions from many quarters, such, for instance, as the experience of moral and spiritual affinities; the mystery of illumination in the experience of the saints; and perhaps the common perceptions of spirit-forms of friends at the moment of passing. What is critical for religion is that the experience is recorded in, and forms part of, the classic story of our Lord's experience.

We may as yet lack the key to its perfect interpretation, but we may be satisfied that an interpretation will one day be possible. The experience belongs to the proper sphere of religion; it has a vital place in that experience, and will one day be seen to be a part of a complete redemption of life.

In the Gospel story it is linked with two things which are in themselves probably inseparable from it. It follows the recognition that Jesus is the

Christ of God, and the deliberate surrender on the part of Jesus to the whole office and function of a suffering Christ, including rejection and crucifixion. And it is linked with a circumstance which justifies its place in the narrative. The rejection by man was made the occasion of a new authentication by God—"This is my Beloved Son; hear ye Him." That authentication was necessary, because the coming rejection would be a new challenge to the faith of the disciples; but it was also necessary because it indicated the sphere in which the Word of Jesus was to be final and authoritative to His disciples. That Word was final and authoritative on the relation of the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father, and through the Son of all the children of men. It was fitting that the Son should be owned of the Father at a moment when the effect of their relationship was made visible to the eyes of the disciples. The physical transformation is a seal set to the spiritual relationship.

§ 31.

A fact such as that of the crucifixion, which is both the central fact of human history and of theological thinking, has a variety of outlook and aspect which is practically infinite. It has relations,

Cross

as S. Paul pointed out long ago, not only to God and man, but to the constitution of the universe itself. To emphasise one of these aspects to the exclusion of the rest, may seem to give a false emphasis. But there is no other way of laying hold upon truth in these regions, and the compensation for any apparently false emphasis is that, whenever one aspect is seen with perfect clearness, all the rest become less hazy. Its bearing on the relations of the natural and spiritual order are here considered.

In the life of all men two orders of being meet — the natural and the spiritual. The complexity and difficulty of human life is largely made up by this meeting; for each order of being has power to take its revenge if it be ignored. If a man neglects the spiritual constitution of his nature and lives for physical satisfactions, he incurs the penalty of spiritual disaster—discontent, unrest, the exhaustion of the springs of moral progress and living interest, despair, and very probably mental disease. On the other hand, if a man ignores the physical side of his being, he incurs the suffering which indicates that the spirit is being torn from the body prematurely and before the time for parting had come. Each order of being

has its own laws. The law of success in the physical is one, and the law of success in the spiritual is another. The physical is built up by one order of living, and the spiritual by another. And the perception of these two orders, and the occasional conflict of their laws, create the divided allegiance which is the tragedy of human life. We grasp at the perfection of the lower, only to find that the higher has eluded us; or we give ourselves to the higher, to find abruptly that we have insufficiently completed the conquest of the lower.

In the beautiful humanness of the life of Christ, we find this conflict between the spiritual order and the physical, not only realised, but concluded in a final unity. He not only reconciles man to God, He reconciles man to himself. In His life the physical is so taken up and made obedient to the spiritual, that it becomes a perfect vehicle of the spiritual will. The natural character of the physical life is the will to live, the instinct which comes out in the temptation to possess the world for self. But to Jesus the physical is both subdued and sublimed into an organ of the spiritual nature,—the will to live has become the will to live, or the willingness to die, for others; and the instinct to possess the world for self is transfigured

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into the will to possess the world for God. To Him the reality of life has become so absolutely identified with the reality of the spiritual in life, or—in His own word—the revelation and establishment of the Kingdom of God, that He cares nothing for life except so far as it serves this purpose. To be obedient to the Father's will, which is the law of the spiritual order, is to Him life. It is meat and drink. The laws by which He lives are the laws of the spiritual order.

From the beginning of our Lord's ministry—in spite of all endeavours of the critics to suggest the contrary—He made it clear that amongst the laws of the spiritual order was the law of the cross. This was the charter, as it were, on which it rested, the fundamental law of its life. "He that saveth his life, shall lose it; he that loseth his life, shall find it." "Let him that would come after Me, take up his cross and follow Me." "I am come not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." It may even be said that the law of the cross underlies the Sermon on the Mount. In such sayings as "Enter ye in at the strait gate," the deeper reality which was in the mind of the Teacher is reflected. The cross becomes in the teaching and in the life of Christ the key

which opens the Kingdom of God to men, and enables them to move into possession of the riches which are stored for them in the heavenly places. The cross is set before us as the concentrated expression of the laws of the spiritual order—laws of life rather than death, of peace rather than penalty, of health rather than loss—and essentially the way of upward movement into the upper rooms which are so mysteriously part of our nature, yet never so completely ours that we can call them ours, or think of them as other than a temporary leasehold which we hold by the grace of God.

§ 32.

We have conceived of human personality as a form of existence possessing the quality of being able to enter into relations with different orders of being—lower and higher. We now note: (1) the supremacy of the *spiritual* order in life comes by way of the cross; peace comes by the way of the cross; (2) progress in the spiritual order is equally by acceptance of the law of the cross; power is by way of the cross also; and (3) also for humanity when sin is in possession, the cross is a condemnation of the sin-order of life and the revelation of the son-order.

It may seem that to think of the cross as belonging to the general life of humanity, rather than first in the life of Christ, in some way derogates from the uniqueness and supremacy of the Cross of Christ. But that need not be the effect of the method chosen if it be understood that, while Jesus shares the manner of His cross with all mankind, the measure of it is all His own. His cross is unique and lonely, both in the intensity of its suffering, the completeness of its obedience, the fullness of its surrender, its entire vicariousness in that of Him alone of all men it could be said that His cross was borne entirely for others, and unique also in its effects on the relations of God and man. A distinction which has been drawn¹ between the inspiration of men in later times and the inspiration of the canonical writers is valid here. Men may be inspired, he maintained, "in the same manner as of old, but we know not of any inspired in the same measure." And so of the cross. It is the law of the spiritual life amongst men, that the cross should be borne after the same manner as Christ's, but we know not of any who bear it after the same measure. The life of Christ becomes to us the supreme revelation of

¹ By Barclay, the Quaker apologist.

the spiritual resources of humanity—their ways of working, the laws of their being, and their effect in human life. The familiar distinction of the theologian between the divine and the human nature in Him does not separate Him from humanity. In the life of our race innocent suffering is common, and life-sacrifice by a voluntary surrender of the will to a spiritual necessity is often necessary. Those who pass through these experiences find a key to them in the Cross of Christ, where suffering is vicarious and surrender ordained of God. inf

The way into the realisation of the spiritual order in life, is the way of the cross. The poets have here been nearer to the truth than the theologians. It is they who have taught that, where the bleeding feet have trod, the flowers of the heavenly life have sprung.

The grip of the spiritual has been associated in some way with the surrender of the physical, either in suffering, or difficulty, or perplexity or physical weakness. It seems that it is only when our roots in the soil are loosened, that we discover how much of our sustenance is derived from the sunshine and the atmosphere. The greatest amount of physical pain is a small price to pay 388

for the smallest amount of spiritual insight. This is, no doubt, the fact which explains the persistent association of asceticism with religious life. A man who has found his own way into the spiritual order through suffering, assumes that if we can persuade others to accept voluntary suffering, they will receive the same liberation; but the argument rests on the familiar illogical confusion *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Voluntary asceticism may only make a man more self-centred than before; for the efficacy of the suffering is not in the endurance of pain, but in the surrender of the physical nature to the spiritual. What tells is the movement upwards of the whole interest of the soul—the withdrawal of that interest from things temporal and the centring of it in things eternal.

Some of the most interesting cases of this entrance into the spiritual kingdom by way of suffering occur in the lives of men not professedly Christian, but whose minds have been formed under Christian influences. Such, for instance, was Mazzini. About the age of thirty, during a revolutionary raid across the Swiss borders into Italy, Mazzini's health collapsed. He had not touched a bed for a week, and fatigue and cold and crushing responsibility brought on fever. The

collapse unstrung him for the time. His mind was almost unhinged, and he attempted suicide. But he emerged out of this period of black misery into a changed view of life. His theory of duty expanded, till it penetrated every cranny of his mind and soul. It is from this time that he begins to live fully and strenuously in the lives of others. His feeling changed about his sufferings: he felt that they had been a blessing from God to be accepted with thankfulness. The ideal of love, love that is given without expectation of return, laid hold upon him. After this time, his soul was

“Like a star
And dwelt apart.”

But it was so, only that he might shed a quickening radiance on the darkness all around him. His power came from the persistent steady light with which the soul had entered into the spiritual realities, which saw things, not as they seem, but as they are.

The association of physical suffering and weakness with the supremacy of the spiritual life, is not without its significance in explaining the tendency of the Christian mind to dwell on the physical sufferings of Jesus Christ. The cross in

its true inwardness is a spiritual fact—its cause, its explanation, and its effect, are found in man's relation to God; but the manifestation of the cross in its spiritual sense is eternally associated with a physical crisis. It is as though the spirit could only realise and secure its own ascendancy by an act of the will, which is equivalent to the surrender of the physical life to physical death; and it is only when that surrender is accomplished, that the soul rises into a freedom which can make the body into a perfect spiritual instrument. Readers of Dr. Dale's Life will remember how he regretted, at the last, that the experience of physical pain had not come to him earlier. He was conscious that, under its discipline, human life took a new aspect. In much the same spirit, Dr. Arnold exclaimed to his son in the agony from which he never recovered—"Matthew, I thank God for this pain, I thank God for this pain." There are many to whom physical weakness has been the instrument of spiritual advance, who would set their seal to this truth, followers of Christ, who, like the Captain of their Salvation, have found life perfected and completed through suffering. We should live in a smaller universe if the sun never went down. When it goes we

discover the glory of other worlds than ours. So the glare of the mundane consciousness of things present must go down before we see the light of the things that are eternal. The physical cross throws the soul back on its own deeper life, drives it inward to find God, compels it to feel the support of others, teaches it to realise the community of mankind, and to live less in itself than in the life of others ; and, in entering into the consciousness of the spiritual solidarity of human life, it finds God.

In coming to know itself in relation to God, it comes to know itself more truly than in any other relation, and so enters on the life which is the life of fellowship with God.

§ 33.

The fact that the cross is the key to the spiritual order helps us to understand what the nature of that order is, and its relation to the normal human consciousness. What happens in the case of physical asceticism is, that one set of relations, of which the mind is normally conscious, is, for the time, inhibited ; and, at the same time, the mind becomes conscious of another set of relations which, under normal circumstances, escape our notice. The temporary

cessation or suspension of physical sensations, or their abnormal acuteness, and the necessity of battling against them, opens, as it were, the mind below the mind, or the mind above the mind. This new consciousness of other and deeper relations to the universe and to humanity, forms what is conventionally described as a "soul."

In the development of the new consciousness of spiritual relation to the eternal things, the law and principle of the cross has a central place. The cross is not only the key of the spiritual order, it is the life of that order. It is as much the law of life in the spiritual kingdom as the struggle for existence and the will to live are the laws of life in the physical kingdom. Our knowledge of the new and deeper relations to our whole human and spiritual environment grows, is extended, developed, and enriched by methods the very reverse of those which bring advancement in the physical world. Life in the spiritual kingdom is a perpetual unfolding of those principles which meet and are expressed in the cross of the Christ. To bring this out completely is beyond my power at present, but the following suggestions may be of service in developing the thought suggested.

The cross stands for the supreme obedience. 21
“Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done.” In Gethsemane is completed the last conflict between the natural will and the spiritual will, which Jesus Christ knew to be the will of His Father. Man’s sin had been his disobedience; his restoration lay in obedience. There could be no harmony, no perfect reconciliation, and no perfect reconciler, until the natural had been made wholly subject to the spiritual will. Only the fullest spiritual consciousness of the relations in which Jesus stood to all mankind, both past and future, relations invisible, intangible to sense, but absolutely real to His own mind, made it possible for him to complete a submission which was a negation of the normal human life—or, perhaps more correctly, the absorption of the normal human will and natural human consciousness, into the divine or spiritual will and consciousness.

This obedience to the law of the cross still functions afresh in the souls of men; and, wherever it is found, it brings the larger and more confident knowledge of the Divine will. It finds expression in most of the developed autobiographies of the soul which have come to

us. S. Teresa speaks of its triumphant joy, Madame Guyon of its peace. "The enraptured soul," says Teresa, "is, as it were, crucified between earth and heaven, enduring its passion. Only the agony carries with it so great a joy, that I know of nothing wherewith to compare it. It is a sharp martyrdom full of sweetness; for if any earthly thing be then offered to the soul, even though it may be that which it habitually found most sweet, the soul will have none of it." Madame Guyon's experience is expressed in the following lines:

"To me 'tis equal whether Love ordain

Me life or death, appoint me pain or ease;

My soul perceives no real ill or pain;

In ease, or health, no real Good she sees.

One Good she covets, and that Good alone;

To choose Thy will, from selfish bias free;

And to prefer a cottage to a throne,

And grief to comfort, if this pleases Thee.

That we should bear the cross is Thy command,

Die to the world, and live to self no more;

Suffer unmoved beneath the rudest hand,

As pleased with shipwreck as when safe on shore."

The cross stands for the supreme humility.

"He humbled Himself . . . even to the death of

the cross." Humility is to the life of the spiritual world what the negative pole is to the positive in the magnet. It is the receptiveness which enables the mind to receive spiritual impressions. As long as the mind is disturbed by the self-assertiveness of its own will, it is practically impervious to spiritual impressions. When it is quieted into the attitude of humility, it absorbs them as a sponge absorbs water. This is the power of silence, for humility is the silence of the soul. Expositions of the first beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," often become a curious exhibition of spiritual nakedness. The words lose their meaning at once, when the spiritual kingdom is confused with the temporal; and the beatitude is reduced to an absurdity when it is expounded by minds which know nothing of any spiritual kingdom. It then becomes necessary to dodge the meaning and say "*with* the poor in spirit," or in some other way to construct an apologia for Uriah Heep. The humility to which the Kingdom of God is given is of another kind. It is that spiritual sensitiveness and receptiveness, which misses no hint, no suggestion of the Divine in other lives

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wherever we meet it ; is never disobedient to the Heavenly vision ; receives and preserves the consciousness of those deeper relations of life which are never wholly hidden from the watchful eye. Where it is present, the consciousness of the spiritual solidarity of mankind makes the humblest service, not only possible, but easy. A man may invest the whole force of his personality in the enrichment of the life of his fellows, and know that he loses nothing. He is richer by all the endowments of love and service and sacrifice which he creates in others.

The cross stands for the supreme love. Love's victory over love's enemy—the selfishness which is sin. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Only a sinless soul can convincingly convey to us the Divine forgiveness of sin. A forgiveness coming from lips less than perfectly pure invites the comment: “yes, but this person does not know the meaning of sin.” It requires a *perfectly pure heart to feel what sin is*, to know its stain. When such a one speaks of forgiveness we know that he means all he says. This is the triumph of the spiritual life, that, when sin and selfishness have done their work, love is still as pure in its integrity, as potent and as

willing to bless, as it was at the first. Many waters of hate, of passion, of sin, cannot drown love, nor can the vortex of devilish egotisms, which toss humanity in their grasp, make love untrue to itself. In the spiritual world love is supreme. The spiritual kingdom is the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Love is its founder, its foundation, its fundamental law, its life, its light, its truth. The cross of Christ reveals what love means in its supreme exercise, in a world where sin and selfishness have had their own way. It is the supreme manifestation of the manner, and meaning, and effect of love, when the spiritual kingdom comes into conflict with the kingdoms of the world; and it demonstrates the otherwise incredible truth that, in that conflict, wherever love is true to itself, it has the victory.

The cross stands for the supreme surrender. d)
“Into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” The final reconciliation between man and God comes when man gives himself to God, and God gives Himself to man. The double surrender makes the perfect unity. In this sense, the connection between Calvary and Pentecost is probably much closer than it is usually seen to be. The Atonement, bringing the return of man to

complete agreement with God, is completed in the surrender on Calvary by One who has identified Himself with humanity, and the response to that surrender is the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The giving of the Holy Spirit is the sign that the Atonement has achieved its purpose. It is God giving Himself to man. God can give Himself to man wherever the surrender of Calvary has done its work. How deeply this represents a law of the spiritual life which is often verified in experience, only those who live in the spiritual life can tell. The act of surrender to God is what Keswick means by consecration; but it is so intensely personal and so profoundly real in each individual life where it is made, that every soul which knows it will choose to express the experience in its own way.

The cross stands for the supreme fidelity. "It is finished." In the spiritual kingdom, tenacity, endurance, patience, go to secure ultimate victory. "In your patience ye shall win your souls." To await the issue of the working of spiritual laws is often very tedious. It requires practically unlimited faith. Some of them require eternity rather than time for their full justification. What is possible within the compass of a human life,

is to become fully obedient to those laws of obedience, humility, love, and surrender, which enable the soul to enter upon its eternal spiritual inheritance. It is required of those to whom God has committed the stewardship of spiritual things, that they be found faithful. In the life of Jesus the consciousness of relation to God, and through Him of all spiritual relations, was unbroken. He completed the task of preserving the filial consciousness entire to the end. The completeness of this fidelity separates Him from all who follow after Him ; but He also lays down a track for them. To them also, the crown of the spiritual life is the reward of fidelity to its principles, its laws, its life.

It is when we come to the relation between the cross and the fact of sin, that we touch its deepest mystery. The law of the cross, in the sense in which the words have been hitherto used in these studies, had a place in the teaching of Christ before His own crucifixion ; and the cross, in the sense explained, as the supreme illustration of the laws of life in the spiritual order, seems to have a necessary relation to the ascent of man from the physical to the spiritual kingdom. But the presence of sin introduces another element and gives the cross

another character; for sin is the rebellion of the lower will against all endeavours to make life an expression of the higher will. It is personal power in reversed action. It endeavours to claim for the lower nature the dominion which belongs to the higher—to shut God out of life that self may have its way untrammelled, and attempt a unification of life from the lower side. It rejects and rebels against every suggestion that unification is only possible through subordinating the selfish will to the Divine will.

In the *material* world we recognise order and harmony, and find that these are maintained by the operation of such laws as the law of gravitation. In the *physical* or natural world we find an order also, and we are told that its law and principle is, in the philosophic phrase, the will to live, or, in the scientific phrase, the struggle for existence. Above or within these we recognise also a *spiritual* order, whose law or principle of life is the law of the cross. Our inner consciousness lays upon us the duty of accepting the spiritual order, and we must conform to it if we are to live in it. There is no necessity laid upon us to do so; but, if we do not, every departure from it lowers us in the scale of being, diminishes

the possibilities of life for us, and makes us aware that we are diverging from the highest law of our being. Conflicting claims distract our own spirit, and bring us into collision with our fellow creatures.

The way out of this disorder and into the life of harmony is found by fixing the centre of life's interest in God; and the laws of the spirit's life are those which give the fullest expression to that relation. On the Godward side, these laws are the laws of filial life—obedience, humility, love, surrender, fidelity or trust. In so far as man lives by these laws of life in the filial attitude, he is in position and ready to receive that inflow of the Divine spirit in which God imparts Himself to men. On the manward side, these are the laws which culminate in the cross. *The filial life towards God is the sacrificial life towards the world.* It lays hold of the spiritual order by subordinating the physical or natural order to the higher necessities; and this has, in the eyes of those who look only on the natural order, the appearance of taking up a cross, though it is really the reverent following of our highest motive. So that, apart from the presence of sin, the law of the cross appears to have its place in making the transition from the natural to spiritual manhood.

When sin enters into human life, man is found, not living to God, but to self. Self-love takes the place of filial love and obedience as a motive of life. What Madame Guyon called *propriété* or spiritual self-aggrandisement begins to work, and man clothes himself with the honours and dignities which belong to God. Life no longer obeys the laws of its true gravitation towards a Divine centre. It becomes centrifugal instead of centripetal, and flies further and further away from harmony and order, into that clashing of multitudinous personal interests which constitute the anarchy, disorder, and misery of human life.

It is due to this that the law of the cross is transformed into the tragedy of Calvary. Every part of the meaning of the conflict finds some echo in the consciousness of Christ. Had sin not been present, there would still have been room for that surrender of the personal will by which the physical is made fully subordinate to the spiritual; but sin, dominant in Scribe and Pharisee, is goaded to utmost fury against a life which reproached it by freedom from sin, and would have subdued and reduced its anarchy to order, its disobedience to obedience. It transforms the willing surrender of the physical life into a violent and bloody

death. Parallel with this is the connection between sin and death that plays so large a part in the New Testament. It is not death, but its terrors, which are made by sin. The fact of physical dissolution is as natural to the spiritual man as birth to the child; but everything which destroys the reality of the spiritual, and dislocates the harmony of man's life with the spiritual order, adds to the terrors of death. The penal aspect of death is the consequence of sin, and it was the penal aspect which Jesus endured in an extreme form, willingly recognising it as a part of the consequence of having linked Himself with a race living under bondage to sin.

The essence of the sacrifice of Christ on its Godward side was not its suffering, but its obedience. He had come to do the Father's will whatever it cost. It was by the reaction of human sin that the course of that obedience was embittered. The suffering and agony of the Cross was our addition to His burden. They were laid on Him by the sin of the race. "He bare the sin of many." And this is the final condemnation of the self-life or life without God.

There is no clearer demonstration possible or conceivable as to what sin is, than the cross

of Christ. This is what comes of living out of all true harmony with God. There, in the agony of the perfect love and goodness, the torture of the perfect humility and obedience; every man reads the true meaning of his own sin; in all such suffering "the Son of God is crucified afresh and put to an open shame." In the same moment we find ourselves face to face with the supreme illustration of the highest life conceivable towards God—the perfection of love, obedience, humility, trust, surrender, fidelity—and with the supreme demonstration of the malignity of that principle in us which refuses to live by these laws, and puts self in the place of God—the principle of sin. We see Jesus bearing this for a purpose of love—a burden not His own—and with a result which tells immediately on those who know Him in evoking an outburst of confidence in God. Is it any wonder then that the cross should be, as S. Paul called it, "the power of God unto salvation" to every one who sees what it means. It contains the Divine dynamic. It is the act in which the gracious purpose of God, and the whole tragedy of human sin, find utterance most completely. To see what it means is, in some measure, to enter for oneself into that

Divine purpose and that human tragedy. Only those in whom this double consciousness is at least germinally present, can see what it means, and for them it is the "dividing asunder of joints and marrow"—it is the discovery for each man, that in his self-life he has been crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame. And it is a discovery, at the same moment, of that way of life where lies for the world harmony and order, forgiveness and peace, obedience and trust—the incoming of that Divine righteousness which makes man partaker of the Divine nature.

In the cross God deals with us both as sons and as sinners; and it is the difficulty of recognising both, which makes the cross so powerful in experience, and so puzzling in thought. As sons we accept the cross and find it the way of life; as sinners we accept it and find it a death and condemnation of sin. As sons in Christ we are forgiven and the forgiveness blots out the consciousness of sin or separation from God; the forgiveness changes the sinner by severing him from his sin. We do not make ourselves sons by accepting a crucified Saviour, but because we are sons we can accept Him as such. The idea that we are to entitle ourselves to become sons

of God by some act of our faith, is a self-deception which is fundamentally opposed to the filial spirit, and prevents our getting into that spirit. It has, as the old theologians used to say, something of the nature of sin, in that it recreates that self-trust which separates the creature from the Creator. A bare proclamation of the Sonship alone is inadequate to the facts of the situation, for we do not naturally live as sons. In the cross, God shows us what sonship means, in its frank acceptance of the justice of the Divine treatment of sin ; and in the attitude of the true Son towards the sin of the world, refusing to concede an inch to its dominion, yet loving and forgiving the men who are under its bondage. It is the cleaving asunder of human life in order to restore a complete mastery to the spiritual and moral nature through their fellowship with God. The son-order of life and the sin-order can make no compromise with one another ; and unless the cross is accepted as the condemnation of the sin principle in us, and a rejection of the worldly mind as a sufficient guide to life, there is no settlement of the real relations between the two. When the cross is accepted, we at least know where we are. We have a clear consciousness of the divided self—the son-life with its attitude

of dependence, obedience, and filial trust towards God, and the sin-envenomed self which lusts against the Spirit.

It is this which makes the forgiven man unwilling to forget the sin which brought him to the cross. He feels that it is truer to the realities of his nature to rest his life on the double fact of his own sin and God's mercy, than to assume that God had dealt with him as a son without teaching him to know his sin.

§ 34.

Two other facts are required to complete the story which transformed the world—the Resurrection and the descent of the Spirit. The Resurrection is necessary because, without it, the revelation of the spiritual kingdom would stop short at a critical point. S. Paul saw that if in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. The spiritual kingdom would then have been a beautiful dream, entertaining and alluring during life, and extinguished by death. What is guaranteed by the Resurrection is the final and real supremacy of the spiritual kingdom. When Jesus passes through death, His personality remains identical. He bears with Him the memory

of His former life, He enters into personal relation with His former disciples, but he touches life from a sphere where He is freed from its limitations. He has ascended on high. His life is regnant, not subservient. He has conquered death.

The descent of the Spirit is the ascent of the disciples. Long meditating on the facts which they had witnessed, and constant reference from the facts to the history which had culminated in this climax, had made the disciples ready to have their eyes opened. As they waited in the upper room, the great moment came, and with an accompaniment of actual visible appearances they experienced the presence and power of the Spiritual Being in Whom and to Whom their Master had lived. It was this personalising of the Kingdom of God, in the experience of each, which made each one of them an apostle. They became the heralds of the Gospel of life to men, and of a revealed and actual Kingdom of God.

When Jesus of Nazareth had lived and died and risen, the critical question as to the interpretation of these events began to agitate men's minds. Was this He that should redeem Israel? Was he indeed Messiah—the Christ—the fulfilment of

the heavenly vision which had inspired Israel's whole religious history?

It is worthy of all note that that question was not settled for the Christian Church by argument, nor by proof texts, though both were abundantly used. At all the turning points it was settled by an experience of illumination or revelation. The disciples walking to Emmaus, the Church of Jerusalem gathered in the upper room at Pentecost, S. Paul on his way to Damascus, were convinced by experience. The mind weighs arguments, but it is revelation which brings certitude. Revelation—the action of the Spirit of God directly on the soul of man—is the historic source of religious knowledge. The historic process has been repeated and doubtless will be repeated in Christian history to the end of time. Jesus Christ lived, taught, and died, and in so doing became the foundation of the Church. But whenever the light of God penetrates the mind of man some one sees the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The man who so sees Jesus becomes in his turn a founder of Christian Churches. He is a Paul, or a Luther, or a Wesley, a Zinzendorff or a Moody. The normal action of revelation is not always communication of new truth. It is the

illumination of old facts, the discovery of their relation to God and to the fulfilment of the Divine Purpose—such as the relation of creation to a Creator or of a Cross to the redemption of the race. It is the action of the revealing Spirit which secures for Jesus Christ a place in the worship of the Christian Church which argument has never been able wholly to rationalise. When the Spirit ceases to illumine the truth as it is in Jesus, that truth cannot hold its place. The maintenance of that faith depends on the continuous action of the Spirit of God within the Church of Christ. It is essentially a judgment on the fact of Christ—an interpretation of the meaning of that fact, a strong, radiant, optimistic faith in God built upon and sustaining itself upon an illumined insight into the truth that God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

§ 35.

For the purpose of religious certainty and finality, revelation is the all-important category. All sorts of categories have been used in the endeavour to estimate the place and work of Jesus, and we may recognise that they serve a purpose even when we insist that they are inade-

quate. A fact so tremendous and outstanding as the fact of Christ may be rightly viewed from many standpoints. But it is legitimate to point out the inadequacy of categories taken from systems of thought and experience less fundamental than religion. An inadequate and one-sided category like evolution cannot possibly yield the same result as the higher category of revelation, which implies from the first the two terms of the religious relation—God and man. Historically, all sorts of sources have been laid under contribution for categories in which to set the Christ. The Jew brought to Him those supplied by the history of His people, and named Him Messiah, Christ, Son of God ; and on one conspicuous occasion Jesus Himself accepted these as adequate (Matt. xvi. 16, 17). The Greek Fathers brought the categories of their philosophy and named Him the Logos, the Eternal Word, immanent and creative. The Schoolmen allowed the redemptive function of Christ to escape while they were finding philosophic categories into which they could fit Him. The Reformation rediscovered Him as Saviour, thanks to Luther, and gave Him the central place in a redemptive scheme ; but in the subsequent development of Protestant scholasticism the human

Christ, the friend, the brother, and physician of human ills was lost.

The ascription of Godhead to Jesus Christ belongs essentially to the language of a worshipping community toward the object of worship. It owns dependence on, and ascribes gracious and saving power to Jesus Christ, and that can only be done frankly and honestly by men who have felt the dependence and experienced the power. The statement, that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,"¹ is a practical and experimental verdict only suited to a community of the saved.

The Victorians, being themselves humanists rather than theologians, gave us innumerable lives of Christ, in which He is the great Humanitarian. The most characteristic product of that whole order of thought is *Ecce Homo*. The Hebrew category of Deity in these presentations is superfluous. It is introduced occasionally from motives of propriety, and to satisfy orthodoxy; but the essential presentation of the life would not be different if it were omitted. And this is quite natural, for Deity as a category for Jesus Christ is relative to the function of a Redeemer in a nation's

¹ Rom. i. 16.

history. Its meaning is that redemption is as entirely a work of God as creation. It requires the whole power of God to redeem a soul, as it requires the whole power of God to create a universe. The entire appreciation of the human soul as against the material universe, and the whole conception of the cosmic God as caring supremely for the moral and spiritual creation of personality is wrapped up with the affirmation of the Deity and atonement of Jesus Christ. It is more an affirmation of what God is to man, and what man is to God, than an affirmation about historical incidents which took place in Palestine. If God be not a Redeemer planning the redemption of a race, and effecting the Divine purpose in Christ, there is no real reason for using the term of Deity in connection with a historic life. Deity cannot be revealed by a microscopic examination of human acts. The term is most naturally introduced as a judgment on an act or series of acts when their result is seen or their effect felt. For one who can say of a present fact "God *is* at work," there are hundreds who can say "we know now that God *was* at work in that experience." We can say with confidence "in this God was at work" when we see a result.

The growth, speech, act, thought, suffering, and death of Jesus look as if they were human.¹ His consciousness of a Divine function comes out on reflection on that life, and is preserved for us in the Fourth Gospel; but that verdict was the result of reflection rather than observation. The consciousness that He was God-sent to do a God-work was clearly in Him, but it was not this quality which first attracted the attention of men. It is when we bring to the life of Christ the conviction that behind all history there is revealed a God, holy in character and spiritual in His modes of action, striving to accomplish man's redemption from sin, and in man a compulsion towards righteousness, which he knows as his destiny, but which always evades him as achievement, that we discover, in Christ, God fully and entirely active, and man fully and perfectly redeemed in His life, death, and rising. And we feel that a God who so reveals Himself in redeeming a race, deserves to be fully owned, perfectly trusted, and reverently worshipped.

¹ Considerations such as Dr. Sanday has put forward in his recent publications throw much light on the spiritual possibilities of humanity. They do not affirm or confirm the Deity of Christ.

§ 36.

The judgment of finality in religion does not mean a claim for the rigidity of any of its forms. The claim in its Christian form means that the Person and work of Jesus Christ are adequate to all the needs of religion, and that the salvation achieved and offered in Him is full and sufficient. Christianity as a faith is distinguished from other faiths not by the problems with which it deals, but by the way it deals with them. Its problems are common and universal. They are presented by the fact that man everywhere finds himself a being dependent on Powers other and greater than his own, finding by experience that in his relation to God some acts and influences hinder and confound him, so becoming sin; and other acts and influences help and sustain, coming into his life and becoming means of grace. He turns to religion for the conquest of sin, and the supply of grace. Religion has to deal with man as subject to a thousand ills, accidental, hereditary, circumstantial, sometimes apparently the sport of events, sometimes their master and lord. It has to face the misery of life, its broken hearts and disappointed hopes, its moral failures and its

unsatisfied affections. It has to arm man against circumstance, give him a faith to make him more than conqueror, and supply an interpretation to the ills of the human lot which shall take the bitterness out of them, and give them a noble meaning.

The distinction of the method of Christianity in dealing with these problems is that : (1) The life of the founder is throughout represented as the redemptive act of God, the Creator being Himself the great deliverer. (2) The Person of the Founder has adequate saving power in the individual, the community, and the race. (3) The quality of the Christian redemption is unique in its range and depth. (4) The redeemed personality affects its human environment with a contagion of regenerated life—resulting in communities formed of those who have experienced regeneration of life, and ultimately in a redeemed world.

§ 37.

1. *The coming of Jesus is the redemptive act of God* or in the terms of the historic revelation, He is God in history actively redeeming man. He claims life for God in all its parts, its highest and lowest, its suffering and loss as well as its triumph and gain. He takes our humanity and perfectly

gives that to God. His whole life is a redemption of the race. He is Saviour, but a Saviour of a new type in the history of religion, for He not only redeems from suffering, He redeems suffering by turning it God-wards and making it a part of the redemption of life, in which all experiences work together for good to them that love God. When He cannot save men out of their troubles, He saves them in them. He endured the Cross, but those who saw it and experienced what followed, instead of having their faith shattered to the dust, came through with an invincible confidence in the justice and love, the power and grace of God. When they experienced the consequences of the Cross, they justified God even in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Christian Faith rests on and rises out of these events. It is a faith that the whole substance and experience of human life has been changed by them ; that we live in a world redeemed into the grace of God ; a world which is reconciled to its God even in the cross and rising again of Jesus Christ, in whom man is justified with God, and God is justified to man.

Behind the miracle of the personality is the relation to God on which it rests. The signifi-

cance of the historic Person depends on the fact that He reveals a Redeeming God, or God as a Father concerned in the redemption of His children. The relation of Jesus Christ to His Father is a Sonship which removes the remoteness of God, sets Him in vital relation to His world, and gives that relation a personal, moral, healing, and redemptive purpose.

244. Owing to the gracious interpretation of the Divine purpose in His life, Jesus Christ is the one mediator who can safely be trusted to unveil the face of the Almighty. God in His absolute-
ness and sovereignty is too overwhelming a companion for human life. Humanity in that great light is dwarfed into nothingness, so that no act of will or purpose of man seems to be of any value. As the sun would destroy all life if it were allowed to beat on the earth unmodified, so a transcendent God, unmediated, withers human initiative and takes the motive out of effort. The sun needs an atmosphere, lambent but diffusive, clear but moderating, through which to do its work. In
some such way the person of Jesus Christ holds for us Deity in active solution in the life of humanity. Through Him God works, and His
work is morally constructive, spiritually redemptive,

and personally regenerating. Yet though Jesus Christ reveals God and makes Him ours, we never lose in the unveiling the sense of mystery and awe. He is no scholastic theologian offering to systematise and label for common human use powers and resources of Deity, which language cannot contain. It is God in His relation to man as man may know Him, and deal with Him, that the Christ reveals, and the revelation reaches us through a personality which is its complement. The perfect medium for the Father's work in humanity is the Son.

§ 38.

The personality of the founder of a religion sets a permanent mark on all its adherents and products. Every adherent is linked with Him by faith; for them the white radiance of the Eternal is coloured by the medium through which it reaches him. Through the Founder, the spiritual resources, the moral dynamic, and the mental ideas of the religion, act on men so long as his religion endures. Any kind of imperfection in the Founder multiplies and aggravates itself in the adherents. Thus the religious negations of Buddha have issued in the passive pessimism of Buddhism.

The most saintly Buddhist is not a philanthropist. He is a cloistered recluse running away from the evils of the world; never a convinced reformer grappling with evil for the victory of the good.

Man
 1. The moral defects of Mohammed, his want of
 2. humanity, his appeal to the sword, the defect of
 3. sexual restraint in his own ideals of conduct, his
 4. refusal of full personality to womanhood, and his
 5. fatalism, have been the parents of a long train of evils in his religion.

In the person of Jesus the spirit of religion finds its perfect and final expression. The religion of Jesus is kept from decay by its perennial contact with the original source of religion, by the continuous operation of the Spirit which first caused religion to spring into being in the heart of man. Where men are capable of being touched with the sense of the presence of God, with the love of God or the love of man, the hope of a better world here, or the expectation of a blessed immortality hereafter, they find a path to Jesus Christ, and He becomes creator of a new life born in the soul. The life He creates He also interprets, and in interpreting He forms it. The man who is alive in Christ lives in a redeemed world. It is no exaggeration to speak of this influence as

creative. The impress of Jesus Christ on the soul summons it to be, calls it out of the mass of sense-bound existence, and endows it with full personality for life in the Kingdom of God. He charges life, for those who are linked with Him, with purpose, a call to high destiny, which make it a new order of being. The old contention that there is a final difference between those who have faith in Christ and those who have not, never rested on a difference in the men themselves. The difference was in the power at work on them. It implied that faith is and establishes a true connection between persons, that through that connection a real moral power operates, and that out of it may come as much moral uplifting as there is in the object of faith. This also is the moral justification of doctrinal discussions which seem to indulge in superfluous hair-splitting. The theologian is strenuously concerned lest anything should block the channel along which the divine saint-making power reaches man. The Christian saint is so much the finest human product in the world's history that no genius is too fine, and no industry too great, to be devoted to the high work of keeping the race in touch with the spiritual dynamic by which the saint is made.

§ 39.

If all religions do their work as offers of salvation, the final victory must be with the religion which offers a salvation most adequate to the whole circle of human need.

Morality rejects Hinduism, philanthropy rejects Buddhism, progressive optimism and humanitarian sympathy reject Islam, spiritual religion rejects Confucianism. If it can be shown that Christ is sufficient for all needs, the whole world must at last turn to Him for a salvation which is personal, spiritual, social, communal, and racial in its range.

Much of the early ministry of Jesus Christ was devoted largely, though not exclusively, to dealing with physical needs. He heals the sick and feeds the hungry, He shows Himself able to understand and relieve the physical sufferings, which are among the first conscious wants of men. The Galilean ministry gives a permanent place in Christianity to the work of philanthropy, and no interpretation of Christianity which undervalues that work can permanently satisfy.

Many of the secondary products of Christianity—hospitals, dispensaries, almshouses, institutions

for caring for the sick, owe their origin to this side of the ministry of Jesus Christ. As these have been found inadequate in scope and result, larger schemes of preventive social effort are attempted ; and these no less than the smaller and more personal, are rightly claimed as streams from the same Fount.

It is now evident that the healing ministry of Jesus Christ is to have a late blossoming after a long period of comparative unfruitfulness. The mysteries of mental or psychic healing are not yet reduced to scientific order, but it is clear that there is an art of healing by acts of prayer and powers of will, which may be practised ; that the secrets of health are not wholly physical ; and that Jesus Christ had and used a power which may still be available for the conquest of many of the evils of life by the spiritual man. Nevertheless, the characteristic feature of the Christian salvation is not its dealing with the physical evils of human life. It is adequate only because Jesus diagnosed more deeply the need which has to be met in bringing salvation to men. He knew that the hidden wound, through which human happiness and well-being ebbed away, was in the wounded

Sin

conscience and the mystery of guilt. When the soul is severed from God by sin, no happiness reaching it from any outside source, no health of body, or perfection of social well-being offers any help.

“Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.”

The mind diseased demands its own ministry, the soul’s breach with God must first be healed.

The adequacy of the Christian redemption lies in its power to meet the primal need by removing the misery and guilt of sin. A sinless Saviour suffering for sin brings assurance of God’s forgiveness, and no other can. To the mutual relations of God and man, man contributes an infinite breach, and God contributes an infinite reconciliation. The breach is healed, not by the omission of sin’s penalty but by bearing it, and the bearer is provided not by the race, though within the race, but by God out of His resources. This gives the specific character to the regenerated personality in the Christian salvation. It is not the blossom on a beautiful stem, as the Greek conceived goodness;

it is an engrafted grace, coming down into character rather than rising from it, and often so much the more wonderful because of the roughness of the stock on which it grows.

§ 40.

Christianity has been pressed into many moulds, but none of them have succeeded in disguising past recovery its essential character. So far as that term is a synonym for the life, teaching, methods, aim, influence, effect of Jesus Christ and the temporal and spiritual consequences of His work, Christianity came into the world and has done its work in the world as a way of salvation for mankind. Its note is the redemption of the world from the dominion of its own sin. It is the cult of a Redeemer. The Christ is heralded as one who shall "save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). The life of Jesus Christ is the life of a Redeemer. It is as a Redeemer that He comes into the world; His teaching is a perpetual declaration of the incoming of life redeemed; it is the unfolding of the possibilities and significance of humanity, as delivered from the bondage of sin. The beatitudes are His vision

of the satisfied life ; the parables His account of life in the Kingdom of God. It is as a Redeemer that He carries on the ministry of healing, that men may know that disease is not for ever, and that part of the freedom of the children of God is to be freedom from bodily disease.

His death is redemptive. It is the death of One who takes upon Himself the burden of an estrangement and alienation from God, which belongs to a humanity whose vision is sin-clouded ; and He takes that burden upon Himself in order that it may not for ever blot out from man the vision of God. He reveals the meaning of sin as only a sinless soul could do, and opens to man's vision an infinitude of love and forgiveness, which makes the return to God still possible.

It is as a Redeemer that He rises from the dead. His resurrection is redemption from the bondage of death ; it confers upon man the freedom of the city which hath the foundations, "whose Builder and Maker is God." So that, whether we will or not, we are the subjects of a Redemption. The life we are living is a redeemed life. We come into a spiritual

atmosphere, into hopes and aspirations, and possibilities which are penetrated through and through with the fact of the Redemption that has been wrought. Through Christ man has been redeemed from the sin-life to the son-life, from the earthward to the Godward outlook, from the life of self to the life of love. } *anti*

Jesus announces His mission as the proclamation of a Kingdom of God in a world which is thereby delivered out of the dominion of darkness, guilt, sorrow and disease; it is a conferment on men of the highest good (Mark i. 14, 15). One of His first public acts was an exposition of what the Kingdom means to its citizens, how it inverts the meaning of human sorrow and entrenches those who enter it impregnably in the citadel of God's love (Matt. v. vi. vii.). His object is variously expressed, but many expressions cover a similar content. "I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly" (John x. 10). "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you" (John xiv. 27). "In this world ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have

overcome the world" (John xvi. 37). He liberates men from the bondage of the traditional religion of Scribes and Pharisees because he finds their methods undermining the real purpose of religion (Matt. v. 21-48). They make God a burden instead of a burden-bearer and helper. The Father is Father of Grace; giving as much as He can; coming into man's life as far as He is permitted. He would have men understand that there is no method of getting from God other than prayer, and that if they ask as children they will get all that a Father would give. He revises the conventional conception of man's relation to God, and always in the direction of simplicity, naturalness, moral elevation, and spiritual directness. He casts the whole responsibility and burden of life on the supreme Giver, and would have men live to Him as children in a Father's household. He prepares for death and endures it because His life is, in His Father's appointment, to be a ransom for many (Mark x. 45, xiv. 24). His death is involved from the first in his commission to become a saviour. He freely accepts it that He may achieve for all men the salvation which was the special

promise of His people's history. He achieves sinlessness that He may perfectly mediate, as only the sinless can, God's forgiveness of sin. His death is the judgment of sin, as His life was its continual challenge. In apparently surrendering to its power, He is really breaking its power for ever by showing it at its worst. He is the sacrifice that ends all sacrifices. His surrender to a shameful death, sin's penalty, is meant to bring the world into agreement with God in His hatred of sin. In accepting sin's penalty He brings us over to the Divine judgment of sin. His blood is shed for remission of sins. His Person becomes the Mercy Seat, where stricken consciences are cleansed by the grace and holiness of God. His life, death, and rising are the one security which history gives us for absolutely believing and trusting in the moral transcendence and actual almightiness of a holy God.

After the death of Jesus the apostles fixed, with the inevitableness of simple minds, on this as the essential character of the new movement. It was a new "way" (Acts ix. 2), not merely a new way of life, but a "way of salvation."

The essential character of the apostolic preaching is the proclamation of Jesus Christ of

Nazareth as the author and embodiment of a way of salvation (Acts v. 42). "In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under Heaven that is given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). *Paul* S. Paul amplifies this dictum. He expands and enlarges the content of the salvation. He works it out in its relation to personal character and social life, its meaning as duty and its promise as hope, in Church and State, for time and eternity: but the essence of his message is that a way of salvation has been revealed and achieved. Jesus Christ has been made to us "wisdom from God and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). The most inclusive category which covers the New Testament teaching as to life, death, and eternity is that we have in it the setting forth in all its completeness of a way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, who rescues life from its littleness, doubt, sorrow, sin, fear, makes death the gate of life, and opens to men the prospect and expectation of a personal immortality, setting men by adoption in His own relation of sonship to the Father. Measuring religions by their purpose, it is clear that in Buddhism, Islam, and

Christianity the idea and ideals of salvation are of immeasurably different depth and content. It is not difficult to defend S. Peter's declaration that there is "none other name" than that of Jesus Christ, when we discover how unique and complete is the transformation of life which is offered in Him. The plea for Christianity is that the founder has so fathomed the height and the depth of life, that by coming into a relation of trust and obedience to Him men do find salvation from sin, the confusions of guilt, and the dread of death.

This is the final cause of a religion. It is not a theory of life, or an account of human origins, it is a practical contribution to a real need; and it has a right to be judged by the adequacy of its means to its end, and the efficiency with which in actual experience it fulfils its purpose.

It is not that Jesus fills one or another of the categories of religion but that He fills them all. He is the fulfilment of that relation in which God meets man, God showing Himself to man as Saviour, man giving himself to God in obedience and trust. He fulfils all that revelation by prophet or priest had promised, and also all that man as religious

had aspired to reach and know. All the ideals and offices of religion are His by right. He is inspired prophet and ideal priest, obedient son and anointed king, brother of all humanity and son of God; master of wisdom, and mystic saint, both the reformer and the standard of morals; psychic physician and healer of the body, unveiler of the unseen. He is sacrifice and temple, atonement and mercy seat, example and motive, servant and lord. If we bring to Jesus Christ the categories of religion, they all start into new meaning. He fills every category and ideal of the Old Testament and interprets its heart, and not less wonderfully he completes the categories and ideals of other religions, and gives them their highest meaning.

§ 41.

The primary expression of the social instinct of a regenerated Christian life is a Church. Such a Church is a community of those who "have a life in Christ to live" and who unite to make the spirit of Christ effective through their co-operation. In the measure of the perfection of their co-operation in redemptive work the spirit of Christ is really with them according to His promise. It is part of the beautiful economy of redemption that Christ is

continually engrafting in the racial stock redeeming activities which at first had their whole root in Him. Humanitarian efforts, which are now carried through by appealing to our "common humanity," owe their origin, both in ancient and modern communities, to instincts liberated in the direction of humanitarian service by the grace of Christ.

As the Church is the first product of the regenerated personality, an ordered community and a saved world is undoubtedly the final aim to which it looks forward. The Church cannot pass out of existence so long as it holds the mystery of that change by which every soul may pass from the "conscience of sin" to "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." But it cannot limit its mission by any artificial limitation. Its work is personal, it deals with personality, it seeks the formation of souls to the pattern of Christ, it may not aim lower than at the production of the saint needed in its age. And it must be prepared to follow up the consequences of giving to the world its most revolutionary influence. It must accept the consequences of creating a Christian community with the hopes and ideals which belong to it, and face the responsibility of formulating principles

for the settlement of its problems. In the presence of a civilisation built on any principle less than Christian, the watchwords of Christian effort must be revolutionary though its methods are evolutionary. The active spiritual forces liberated by the Gospel must always create Churches "in Christ," and such Churches must always seek to win the world to their own principles of life. To this kingdom there is no frontier.

§ 42.

The words "In Christ" or "In Jesus Christ" occur fifty-five times in the New Testament. Fifty-four of these occasions are in the epistles of the Apostle Paul; the fifty-fifth is in a benediction in the first epistle of S. Peter which is clearly influenced by S. Paul's custom. These figures are not to be dismissed as mere statistics. If a straw shows which way the wind blows, statistics of this kind may show the channels of thought in which the Apostle's mind most often ran. They show the Apostle as the founder of Christianity as a working, worshipping religion, built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. If we can follow S. Paul in his use of a phrase which recurs whenever he is dealing with the heart of his faith, the idea which was in his mind

should take shape in ours, and we shall have a clue to what the Apostle meant when he went about Asia and Europe founding Churches in Christ.

To us the phrase has a conventional ring. It has suffered much at the hands of many commentators. It has been used as a shibboleth. It sounds like a catchword. But it could have no such ring in the ears of those who first heard it. It is like a battered coin much defaced by passing through many hands. It ought to be taken to the mint where it was fashioned. The mint where this thought-coin was fashioned was an experience. Before that experience came to S. Paul he had no use for such a phrase; after that experience he could not do without it. It expressed something which had become part of himself. Reduced to its barest terms, S. Paul's experience was that he found himself in the presence of Jesus Christ, as a living and actual Person victorious over death and able to make Himself known to living men. Compelled to confront Jesus Christ, and to establish some relation between Him and the rest of the world, S. Paul made important spiritual discoveries. He discovered the immediate presence of a spiritual God: he found that God had, in giving Jesus of Nazareth to the world, made a great and gracious

true { effort to discover Himself to men ; and that His own people instead of welcoming this revelation, had crucified the Revealer as a blasphemer. "Spiritual discoveries are always transforming," said Jonathan Edwards: when these discoveries broke upon S. Paul, it was as if a great tide had swept over a landscape, and when it subsided had left all the landmarks so changed as to be hardly recognisable.

When S. Paul began to define his own outlook he found that the old isolation of Judaism was gone. The Messiah was no longer a Jewish possession ; He was the universal man, the redeemer of the race. S. Paul's views of the origin and destiny of man had changed. "If the dead are not raised, Christ is not raised," but Christ rose, therefore the dead are raised. He saw all men destined to a spiritual existence, and felt that for Jew and Gentile alike, life must be lived in the light and expectation of that destiny. Truths which he had held as dogmas issued from his mind as the instincts and experiences of faith. His religion was no longer a tradition of the elders, a dogmatic system descending on him from the outside ; it had become to him "truth in the inward parts," from which he could not separate himself even if he would. The

changed outlook changed the man. He knew himself to be another man, and his friends found him so. And to mark this change he used the phrase "In Christ." From this time he thought of himself as having become a man in Christ.

"Religion," it is said, "is a passionate conviction as to the nature of life." S. Paul's religion from this time became a passionate conviction that life is what Jesus Christ had revealed it to be; a fellowship of Sonship and Fatherhood, a communion between heaven and earth, an opportunity of serving and suffering in time for the sake of things that are timeless, a transition from life in things material to life in things spiritual, a passing of man through the changes and chances of human life to security of life in God.

Behind the words "in Christ," then, we have a changed consciousness of life and a changed man. Does it mean the destruction of a personality? Clearly not. S. Paul, after he has become a man in Christ, has enough of the same characteristics in temperament and habit of mind to guarantee his identity with Saul of Tarsus. Union with Christ is not the destruction of personality. The psychologists have in recent years been telling us that a personality may retain its continuity although the

consciousness—the whole outlook on life—is changed. We may come to look out on the world with other eyes than our own, and yet remain the same persons. Something like this certainly took place in S. Paul. He carried to the end traces of the stages through which his mind had passed. He could speak as a Rabbinical scholar, as a Hebrew to Hebrews, as a teacher, leader, or friend ; and then he could break away from every less perfect outlook on life, and say, “If I have forgiven anything, for your sakes have I forgiven it in the person of Christ.” In such cases the person of Christ overmastered his own. He could identify himself with the attitude of the Christ towards men and act accordingly. But if we are to see how much S. Paul meant by being “in Christ,” we must get at his meaning by an induction rather than a description.

The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans viii. 2).

Here “in Christ Jesus” is a sphere of freedom; and it is freedom of a well-known and recognisable type. It is the freedom by which a higher law and a more developed life-system supersede a lower and less developed one.

It used to be the proud boast of our countrymen that no slave could breathe under the British flag. By setting foot on British soil he ceased to be a slave. The law of freedom superseded the laws of slavery as by a higher right. What our fathers claimed for British rule in the sphere of personal freedom S. Paul claimed for the person of Christ in the sphere of spiritual freedom. No man, however bound in bondage of sin by lusts, passions, habits, superstitions, worldliness, or selfishness could come into Christ without finding his bonds fall from him. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus would set him free from the law of sin and death. When Eliza, the slave mother in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, finds that she is sold to a new owner who is going to separate her from her child, she makes a desperate effort to escape. She has been sold in Kentucky: if she can get into Ohio she will be under other laws, and her child will be her own. She slips away from the inn where the sale has been transacted down to the river bank. But there is no boat to take her across! She hides in terror till she hears the hounds baying on her track. Then, with the courage of despair, she leaps out on the floating ice floes in the river; she passes from one to another, her child in her arms,

her feet cut and bleeding, till she is almost across the river; then as she nears the other shore a stranger who has watched her flight reaches out a hand and she lands in safety—a *free woman*. The laws that bound her do not run here. They have ceased to have any authority over her.

That is the kind of analogy in S. Paul's mind. He has seen men in Corinth and Ephesus steeped in the vices of a great city. He has seen the worn sensualist, and the worldly merchant, and the superstitious worshipper, and the light-headed follower after vain things come "into Christ"; he has seen the old habits come out to challenge the allegiance of new disciples, to pursue them like a slave-owner's hounds on their track. And he has seen such men pass unharmed through their struggle, and break the old bondage that had held them. *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death.* The higher obligation has absolved them from the lower. To come into Christ is to come into a sphere of freedom—the highest type of freedom known to human life—freedom to become what God meant man to be.

Salute Prisca and Aquila my fellow workers in Christ Jesus . . . Salute Urbanus our fellow worker in

Christ (Rom. xvi. 1 and 9). "In Christ" is a sphere of work as well as a sphere of freedom. The nature of the work is tolerably clear from the connection in which the words occur. Aquila and Priscilla had a "church in their house," where they and others constantly endeavoured to justify the ways of God to men; and brought men to the knowledge of God through Christ. To be "in Christ" was to be a fellow worker with S. Paul in this great endeavour. "In Christ" they found a solution of the problem of man's relation to the unseen world. They found the "good news of God" which lifted away the uncertainties which hung like a mist over man's destiny; and they felt the news so great that they must make it known. They became fellow workers in the endeavour to bring men into a life which was to be a conscious fellowship with God.

It is more common to recognise that Christ has freed men from the dominion of sin than to see that He has called men to become "fellow workers" in a cause. He is known as a liberator, but not enough as a dynamic. But freedom is not an end in itself. When men are freed they are free to do something. The freedom which is "in Christ" breaks the bondage of sin that

we may follow the guidance of a new Lord. Many accept the freedom and refuse the guidance; and the result is a generation emancipated but motiveless; they do not know what they owe to Christ, and have no desire to secure for others the freedom which has made them what they are. We need to rediscover the truth that to be "in Christ" is to have a definite kind of work to do in the world. It is in the endeavour to do that work sincerely that all discoveries are made of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Love itself is more often the child of service than its parent. Out of the experience of difficulties overcome, of the hearts of men answering to the word of Christ, and the minds of men responding to His Spirit, comes the confidence which is the renewal of faith. It is an old recipe for dealing with scepticism to send it to teach in a slum or a ragged-school. The worth of the spiritual element in life is never so manifest as when we come to know the meaning of life stripped bare of that element. It is then we know what it is to be "fellow workers in Christ."

Sometimes one gets a flash of insight into S. Paul's mind through a single casual phrase, as when he says, "I speak the truth *in Christ*, I lie not"; or,

"minds corrupted from simplicity toward Christ."¹

The life of humanity as S. Paul sees it in Christ is a clean, sweet, ordered, simple life. Of late much has been said and written of the simple life. But the simple life is not life in a cottage or life in a flat, but life "*in Christ*." And it is that wherever it is lived. The talk about the simple life is a natural revolt against the complications of a cumbersome civilisation which is at some points becoming too heavy for the shoulders that have to carry it. Our churches are like the Italian condottieri in the days when defensive armour had reached its highest point of development, and before guns had been introduced to make armour useless. They were so smothered in armour that when a man fell from his horse he could not rise. He might expire on the ground unless some friend came to release him. With us it is the elaborate organisation of life, and the increasing demands of ecclesiastical dominion which are destroying the spontaneity of nature in the soul's life. We need more of nature in the soul. Corporate life is part of our normal development as civilised beings,

¹The R.V. reads *toward Christ*, where the A.V. had "in Christ." The later translation expands the meaning of the first.

but it defeats its end when it destroys individuality, spontaneity, and the self-determining authority of personality. It is a relief from the extravagant demands of churches and states to return to the simple life of personal allegiance to Christ. "Subtlety may deceive you," said Oliver Cromwell, "sincerity never will." Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay. It is by this standard we are bound to try many of the demands made in the name of Christianity and the Christian churches. It is not easy to tell exactly when some enterprise which originates in a Christian impulse, or some development which is Christian in origin, ceases to be Christian in its methods and results. Yet we can see that sometimes instead of the leaven raising the lump, the lump merely chokes the leaven. S. Paul reminds us that it is our duty to apply this direct and forceful test. Whatever destroys our "simplicity toward Christ" is no part of the life in Christ. If we cannot speak the truth in Christ we are in the wrong atmosphere and had better get out of it.

S. Paul speaks of being "*bold in Christ*," and we may associate with that his claim that we have a "high calling of God *in Christ Jesus*." The high calling is literally an *upward* calling; that is a

calling to come up into the higher ranges of life. And this is rightly linked closely with the call to be "fellow-workers with Christ," for work which depends on spiritual motives, dynamics, and sanctions can only be done in the clearest atmosphere of the spiritual life. Some of us know what it is to start on a summer's day to climb some mountain in Switzerland, or one of our own Welsh or Highland hills. In the sluggish air of the valley we feel as if the mountain were impregnable. "To climb that height is impossible for me," we say. But the climb begins, and as we rise into the finer, stronger air, we feel that new strength comes. The air has a tonic effect. Muscles get more spring, lungs do their work more rapidly and easily, and the distance seems less than we had imagined. At the end of the day we have accomplished what we had thought impossible.

This is what occurs, according to the analogy of faith, in the upward calling of Christ. The call to the saintly life is a call which seems outside our range altogether when we first hear it. "That quest is not for me," we say. But we receive faith to make a beginning; we cast ourselves on Christ for good and all; commit ourselves to Him

that He may make the best of us He can, and we find new faculties develop in the process of using the old. The spiritual unfolds, disclosing stronger motives, richer resources, than we had supposed. We end by reaching a goal which we had no strength or fitness of our own to reach, and we know that the strength that brought us there was not our own. One of the worst of all blunders about the Christian life is the one that makes it shrinking, timid, cloistered, when it ought to be a vast venture of faith opening the way for the powers of God to come into our lives.

We find such a phrase as this, *the veil is done away in Christ* (2 Cor. iii. 14). S. Paul is conscious, as we may be conscious, of a veil which hides the spiritual things from the eye of the natural man. When a Scotch mist comes up from the sea one may be shut in, in a moment, to a few feet of ground on each side; and all the mountain peaks are hidden from sight. On the other hand the effect of a clear atmosphere, especially in dry southern lands, is that remote objects seem to be brought near, and the eye is deceived by the apparent distinctness of things really remote. So also there are times when the spiritual atmosphere of life is heavily laden with misty exhalations from

many quarters. We cannot see clearly its purpose, its meaning, its goal; we miss the path for our feet because the great spiritual realities, love and sacrifice, obedience and trust, Fatherhood and Sonship, are hidden. We feel the "painful riddle of the earth," and the "heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world" seems to be resting on the shoulders of one feeble individual.

God hides Himself so wondrously
As if there were no God,
He is least seen when all the powers
Of ill are most abroad.

Faith is appalled by the apparent indifference of God to the interests of His own Kingdom—as it seems to us.

Then we bring our perplexity "into Christ;" we look out on the world through His eyes; we see the clouds gather about His head till He breaks through them with, "Father, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless not my will but Thine be done." He teaches us to say "our Father," and we are sure again of the love that upholds and the wisdom that guides. He rouses in us the sustaining consciousness of a large and loving Presence *in whom we live and move and have our being.*

The eternal life is clear in Christ, however misty and far off it may seem in other atmospheres. Indeed the disciple's difficulty has always been that the last things, the judgment and the supremacy and reign of the King of Love, are so clear in Christ that they get out of perspective. They seem to be close at hand; and expectations based on that appearance prove disappointing with the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick. It would help many if they could see that these, like much besides in the life of Christ, belong to the eternal rather than to the temporal in Him. In Him judgment, holiness, truth, life eternal do indeed come into time, but they do so without losing their character as eternal and spiritual. They still belong to the spiritual Kingdom, and not till we ourselves are wholly citizens of that Kingdom shall we see them as they are.

The climax of S. Paul's way of interpreting the Christian life is reached in the phrase, "new creatures in Christ Jesus" (2 Cor. v. 17). Men who live in this sphere of spiritual freedom, work in this atmosphere, and admit the force of this dynamic, undergo a new spiritual creation. The fact has its physical analogy with which every one is familiar. We may have known someone con-

demned to exile by the doctors. He was told that he could not live in this climate, but if he would go to South Africa or New Zealand or Australia, breathe a drier atmosphere, live in the open air, he might indefinitely prolong his life. He went, and we lost sight of him for a time; but in ten or fifteen years he came back, broad-shouldered, sun-browned, vigorous, hearty, strong. When we saw him we said instinctively, "My friend, you are a new man, one would hardly have known you." And, pedantry aside, the phrase is true enough. The body has been rebuilt, new elements built into it, new energies stored in it, years of hope and service have now become possible for it which were once impossible.

So S. Paul felt when he looked upon men and women whom he had known steeped in the vices of great Eastern cities. He had seen them lost to all the nobler meaning of life. He had preached Christ to them. They had learned to live in Christ. New elements had been built into their life. Instead of a life towards self or towards the world their life had become a life towards God. They had drawn into their lives hopes, energies, and powers of service which had been impossible for them without Christ. They had become new

creatures in Christ Jesus, and owned themselves a new creation.

It is this fundamental experience of life in Christ which lies behind S. Paul's description of the Church as "*one body in Christ*" (1 Cor. xii. 12). The phrase is much used and often misused. A church is the "body of Christ" when the members of the body are members in Christ. The figure has a definiteness of meaning and implication which is not sufficiently recognised. It is intended as a description of a spiritual fact. The unity of a church is its unity in a great common experience. It is unity in point of view, in aim, in hope, in mind. Life "in Christ" is not a solitary achievement. We misrepresent it when we so represent it. It is a social experience. It is full of relations of love and service, faith and sacrifice; it is a perpetual outflow and inflow of spiritual energies of humility and sympathy and redeeming help. The body requires all its members, and only when all are fulfilling their functions is the body built up. A church "in Christ" should liberate in its members all the more spiritual powers of their nature, and reproduce among men something of that community of good—a different and much higher thing than a

community of goods—which we believe is characteristic of the life eternal as we shall find it in the Kingdom of God.

The ideal church is linked with Christ in the sense that it can measure its meaning and purpose by no other standard. The length, breadth, depth and height are determined for it by the spirit and character of its creator. Its length is as long as His patience with men; its breadth as broad as His love; its height as high as His prayer for His disciples; its depth as deep as His sacrifice.

NOTES.

ILLUSTRATIONS of the immediate experience of God are added in notes A and B. Such records are not necessary for those who have had similar experiences, but they bring out the fact that the reasons given for belief and the things said in public by public men about religion understate the real grounds of their faith. The reasons given are not the grounds of faith, but its defence. Their faith rests at bottom on some experience or spiritual intuition of God. It is that experience which out-lasts all reasons and refuses to surrender one jot or tittle of its certainty to argument. Arguments are useful, especially when they are cumulative, but they would not be required if the experience had not preceded them.

NOTE A.

In J. Trevor's *My Quest for God* an experience of this kind is the basis of his whole religious life.

“One brilliant Sunday morning, my wife and boys went to the Unitarian Chapel in Macclesfield. I felt it impossible to accompany them—as though to leave the sunshine on the hills, and go down there to the chapel, would be for the time an act of spiritual suicide. And I

felt much need for new inspiration and expansion in my life. For nearly an hour I walked along the road to the "Cat and Fiddle," and then returned. *On the way back, suddenly, without warning, I felt that I was in Heaven—an inward state of peace and joy and assurance indescribably intense, accompanied with a sense of being bathed in a warm glow of light, as though the external condition had brought about the internal effect—a feeling of having passed beyond the body, though the scene around me stood out more clearly and as if nearer to me than before, by reason of the illumination in the midst of which I seemed to be placed. This deep emotion lasted, though with decreasing strength, until I reached home, and for some time after, only gradually passing away.*¹

"The writer adds that having had further experiences of a similar sort, he now knows them well.

"*'The spiritual life,' he writes, 'justifies itself to those who live it; but what can we say to those who do not understand? This, at least, we can say, that it is a life whose experiences are proved real to their possessor, because they remain with him when brought closest into contact with the objective realities of life. Dreams cannot stand this test. We wake from them to find that they are but dreams. Wanderings of an overwrought brain do not stand this test. These highest experiences that I have had of God's presence have been rare and brief—flashes of consciousness which have compelled me to exclaim with surprise: God is here!—or conditions of exaltation and*

¹ *My Quest for God.* London, 1897. Pp. 268, 269, abridged. By J. Trevor. Quoted by Professor William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 396, 397.

*insight, less intense, and only gradually passing away. I have severely questioned the worth of these moments. To no soul have I named them, lest I should be building my life and work on mere phantasies of the brain. But I find that, after every questioning and test, they stand out to-day as the most real experiences of my life, and experiences which have explained and justified and unified all past experiences and all past growth. Indeed, their reality and their far-reaching significance are ever becoming more clear and evident. When they came, I was living the fullest, strongest, sanest, deepest life. I was not seeking them. What I was seeking, with resolute determination, was to live more intensely my own life, as against what I knew would be the adverse judgment of the world. It was in the most real seasons that the Real Presence came, and I was aware that I was immersed in the infinite ocean of God.'"*¹

The following illustration is from the experience of a Canadian doctor :

"I had spent the evening in a great city, with two friends, reading and discussing poetry and philosophy. We parted at midnight. I had a long drive in a hansom to my lodging. My mind, deeply under the influence of the ideas, images, and emotions called up by the reading and talk, was calm and peaceful. I was in a state of quiet, almost passive enjoyment, not actually thinking, but letting ideas, images, and emotions flow of themselves, as it were, through my mind. *All at once, without warning*

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 256, 257, abridged. By J. Trevor. Quoted by Professor William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 397, 398.

of any kind, I found myself wrapped in a flame-coloured cloud. For an instant I thought of fire, an immense conflagration somewhere close by in that great city; the next, I knew that the fire was within myself. Directly afterward there came upon me a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination impossible to describe. Among other things, I did not merely come to believe, but I saw that the universe is not composed of dead matter, but is, on the contrary, a living Presence; I became conscious in myself of eternal life. It was not a conviction that I would have eternal life, but a consciousness that I possessed eternal life then; I saw that all men are immortal; that the cosmic order is such that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all; that the foundation principle of the world, of all the worlds, is what we call love, and that the happiness of each and all is in the long run absolutely certain. The vision lasted a few seconds and was gone; but the memory of it and the sense of the reality of what it taught has remained during the quarter of a century which has since elapsed. I knew that what the vision showed was true. I had attained to a point of view from which I saw that it must be true. That view, that conviction, I may say that consciousness, has never, even during periods of the deepest depression, been lost.'"¹

¹ *Loc. cit.* pp. 7, 8. By Dr. Bucke. The quotation follows the privately printed pamphlet which preceded Dr. Bucke's larger work, and differs verbally a little from the text of the latter. Quoted by Professor William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 399.

Of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, his son wrote :

"Throughout his life he had a constant feeling of a spiritual harmony existing between ourselves and the outward visible universe, and of the actual permanence of God in the infinitesimal atom as in the vastest system. 'If God,' he would say, 'were to withdraw Himself for one single instant from this universe, everything would vanish into nothingness.'"¹

And Alfred Tennyson himself wrote :

"A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself silently, till all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, when death was almost a laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the very true life." "This might," he said, "be the state which St. Paul describes, 'Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell.'"²

A well-known Congregational minister and writer, Mr. Brierley ("J. B." of the *Christian World*), describes an experience of the same type in the following words :

"The writer speaks again with some hesitancy, not sure whether on this point he is reporting what is to any extent a common experience. But he can testify

¹ *Tennyson: A Memoir*, vol. i. 319.

² *Ibid.* p. 320.

with certainty as an individual to occasions, coming at widely separated intervals in the career, when the soul, under the conditions of sleep, has become conscious of itself with a power, a freshness as of immortal youth, a felt relation to the illimitable and the eternal, accompanied by a thrilling rapture, as of heaven's central life, to which no waking state can offer a parallel. In remembering such times one recalls Philo's description of 'the spiritual ecstasy,' when 'the soul having transcended earthly things, is seized with a sober intoxication, like the frenzy of the Corybantes, only with a nobler longing, and so is borne upward to the very verge of spiritual things, into the presence of the great King.'"¹

The following quotation is from a private letter:²

"Have you ever thought regarding the Agnostic position that it is untenable on this ground? It is based on the philosophy of the Unknowable; but one fact puts to flight incorrect metaphysics. It is said: 'We cannot know God.' I say that I do know God; that he is my dearest and most intimate friend; that though I cannot discover Him, He is constantly and graciously revealing Himself to me. Now, you know me. I am not a liar. I am not a fanatic. I am not incompetent. I do not juggle with words. Compared with this reality, everything else—even my knowledge of you—is unsubstantial and phenomenal. Yes; and there are thousands who can say the same thing. You

¹ *Ourselves and the Universe*. By J. Brierley, B.A. Pp. 258-259.

² Printed in the Life of the late J. A. Macfadyen of Manchester, page 280.

may be able to say it yourself one day. How then can it be an axiom that God cannot be known? Herbert Spencer cannot evade that argument. He shelters himself behind Mansel, and assumes that he is the type of the Christian thinker; whereas, he is disclaimed when his language is understood by every thoughtful and spiritual Christian."

of p. 74-
The following case has an element of piquancy and verisimilitude from the fact that it was reported from a distinctly hostile point of view by the writer, David Brainerd, the famous missionary—a thoroughly orthodox, evangelical, devout Presbyterian, whose life may be said to have made missionary work amongst the Red Indians for the first time a splendid reality. Amongst his converts was an Indian diviner, who was supposed to have a power of foretelling future events, of healing the sick, and of charming or enchanting, or poisoning persons to death by his divinations :

"I have laboured," he says, "to gain some information respecting their conjuration, and have for that end consulted with the man mentioned in my Journal of May 9, who, since his conversion to Christianity, has endeavoured to give me the best intelligence he could of this matter. But it seems to be such a mystery of iniquity that I cannot well understand it, and know not oftentimes what ideas to affix to the terms he makes use of; and so far as I can learn, he himself has not any clear notions of the thing, now his spirit of divination is gone from him. However, the manner in which he says he obtained this spirit of divination was this: he was admitted into the presence of a great man, who informed

him that he loved, pitied, and desired to do him good. It was not in this world that he saw the great man, but in a world above at a vast distance from this. The great man, he says, was clothed with the day ; yea, with the brightest day he ever saw ; a day of many years, yea, of everlasting continuance. This whole world, he says, was drawn upon him, so that *in* him the earth and all things in it might be seen. I asked him if rocks, mountains, and seas were drawn upon or appeared in him. He replied, everything that was beautiful and lovely in the earth was upon him, and might be seen by looking on him, as well as if one was on the earth to take a view of him there. By the side of the great man, he says, stood his shadow or spirit ; for he used *chichung*, the word they commonly make use of to express that of the man which survives the body, which word properly signifies a shadow. This shadow, he says, was as lovely as the man himself, and filled all places, and was most agreeable as well as wonderful to him. Here, he says, he tarried some time, and was unspeakably entertained and delighted with a view of the great man, of his shadow or spirit, and of all things in him. And what is most of all astonishing, he imagines all this to have passed before he was born. He never had been, he says, in this world at that time. And what confirms him in the belief of this is, that the great man told him that he must come down to earth, be born of such a woman, meet with such and such things, and in particular, that he should once in his life be guilty of murder. At this he was displeased, and told the great man he would never murder. But the great man replied, ‘I have said it, and it shall be so’ ; and it accordingly happened. At

this time, he says, the great man asked him what he would choose in life. He replied, first to be a hunter, and afterwards to be a Powwow or diviner. The great man told him he should have what he desired, and that his shadow should go along with him down to earth, and be with him for ever. There was, he says, all this time, no word spoken between them. The conference was not carried on by any human language, but they had a kind of mental intelligence of each other's thoughts, dispositions, and proposals. After this he saw the great man no more; but supposes he now came down to earth to be born. The spirit or shadow of the great man still attended him, and ever after continued to appear to him in dreams and other ways, until he felt the power of God's Word upon his heart; since which it has entirely left him.

"This spirit, he says, used sometimes to direct him in dreams to go to such a place and hunt, assuring him he should there meet with success, and so it proved. When he had been there some time, the spirit would order him to another place. Thus he had success in hunting, according to the great man's promise made to him at the time of his choosing this employment.

"Sometimes this spirit came upon him in a special manner, and he was full of what he saw in the great man.

Then, he says, he was all light, and not only light himself, but it was light all around him, so that he could see through men and knew the thoughts of their hearts . . . My interpreter informs me that he heard one of them tell a certain Indian the secret thoughts of his heart, which he had never divulged. The case was this: the Indian was bitten with a snake, and in extreme pain. The diviner

being applied to for his recovery, told him that at such a time he had promised the next deer he killed should be sacrificed to some great power, but he had broken his promise. And now, said he, that great power has ordered this snake to bite you for your neglect. The Indian confessed it was so, but said he had never told anybody of it." ¹

Professor James, who, if not the most cautious, is the most interesting of the writers on religious experiences, says :

"I cannot but think that the most important step forward that has occurred in psychology since I have been a student of that science is the discovery, first made in 1886, that, in certain subjects at least, there is not only the consciousness of the ordinary field, with its usual centre and margin, but an addition thereto in the shape of a set of memories, thoughts, and feelings which are extra-marginal and outside of the primary consciousness altogether, but yet must be classed as conscious facts of some sort, able to reveal their presence by unmistakable signs. I call this the most important step forward, because, unlike the other advances which psychology has made, this discovery has revealed to us an entirely unsuspected peculiarity *in the constitution of human nature*. No other step forward which psychology has made can proffer any such claim as this. In particular this discovery of a consciousness existing beyond the field, or subliminally, as Mr. Myers terms it, casts lights on many phenomena of religious biography."

Subliminal
Conscious

¹ *The Journal of David Brainerd*. First Appendix. Pp. 208-212.

The positive conclusion at which Professor James himself arrives after a discursive examination of the literature of the subject is, that in the normal operations of the mind there mingles a lower and a higher, or a lesser and a fuller, a normal and an abnormal consciousness; the lower always carrying with it a sense of discord and incompleteness in its relations to the universe, and the higher a consciousness of harmony and rightness in those relations.

"The individual," he says, "so far as he suffers from his wrongness and criticises it, is to that extent consciously beyond it, and in at least possible touch with something higher, if anything higher exist. Along with the wrong part there is thus a better part of him, even though it may be but a most helpless germ. With which part he should identify his real being is by no means obvious at this stage; but when stage two (the stage of solution or salvation) arrives,¹ the man identifies his real being with the germinal higher part of himself; and does so in the following way. He becomes conscious that this higher part is conterminous and continuous with a more of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck."

He then goes on to define what he means by the phrase "more of the same quality":

"Since one of the duties of the science of religions is

¹ "Remember that for some men it arrives suddenly, for others gradually, whilst others again practically enjoy it all their life."

to keep religion in connection with the rest of science, we shall do well to seek first of all a way of describing the *more*, which psychologists may also recognise as real. The *subconscious self* is nowadays a well-accredited psychological entity; and I believe that in it we have exactly the mediating term required. Apart from all religious considerations, there is actually and literally more life in our total soul than we are at any time aware of. The exploration of the transmarginal field has hardly yet been seriously undertaken, but what Mr. Myers said in 1892 in his essay on the Subliminal Consciousness is as true as when it was first written: 'Each of us is in reality an abiding psychical entity far more extensive than he knows—an individuality which can never express itself completely through any corporeal manifestation. The Self manifests through the organism; but there is always some part of the Self unmanifested; and always, as it seems, some power of organic expression in abeyance or reserve.'

"Much of the content of this larger background against which our conscious being stands out in relief is insignificant. . . . But in it many of the performances of genius seem also to have their origin; and in our study of conversion, of mystical experiences, and of prayer, we have seen how striking a part invasions from this region play in the religious life. Let me then propose, as an hypothesis, that whatever it may be on its farther side, the "*more*" with which in religious experience we feel ourselves connected is on its *hither* side the subconscious continuation of our conscious life. Starting thus with a recognised psychological fact as our basis, we seem to

preserve a contact with 'science' which the ordinary theologian lacks. At the same time the theologian's contention that the religious man is moved by an external power is vindicated, for it is one of the peculiarities of invasions from the subconscious region to take on objective appearances and to suggest to the Subject an external control. In the religious life the control is felt as 'higher'; but since in our hypothesis it is primarily the higher faculties of our own hidden mind which are controlling, the sense of union with the power beyond us is a sense of something, not merely apparently, but literally true."

NOTE B.

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD IN CHRIST.

Horace Bushnell's experience is thus recorded by his biographer :

"The year 1848 was the central point in the life of Horace Bushnell. It was a year of great experiences, great thoughts, great labours.' So his wife writes in his *Biography*. The outcome was the volume, *God in Christ*. The order in this category is rightly given. Whatever came from him was first the result of experience. He was not chiefly a speculator in the world of thought, nor a dreamer in the world of visions, but a practical man in a real world. The death of his child five years before had not ceased to bear fruit in revelations of the Fatherhood of God. 'He took my son to His own more fatherly bosom, and revealed in my bosom the same expectation and faith of His own eternal Son.'

He read the *Life of Madame Guyon*, and Upham's *Interior Life*, and Fénelon, and yielded somewhat to a mystical wave of thought that was then passing over New England. He touched 'quietism,' but quickly and by a necessity of his nature reacted from it, yet not without retaining something of its value in the practical world where he belonged and worked. A crisis seems to have been reached in an experience described as follows:

"On an early morning of February his wife awoke to hear that the light they had waited for, more than they that watch for the morning, had risen indeed. She asked—*What have you seen?* He replied—*The Gospel*. It came to him at last, after all his thought and study, not as something reasoned out, but as an inspiration—a revelation from the mind of God Himself. The full meaning of his answer he embodied at once in a sermon on *Christ the Form of the Soul*, from the text, *Until Christ be formed in you.*"¹

In Bushnell's case, and in the following one, the central fact of the experience is that the emotion, which in the other cases is stirred by the presence of God in nature, is in these cases stirred by the discovery of God in Christ. It is, to use S. Paul's phrase, as though the pleroma of the Godhead, the whole spiritual forces of the universe, were seen to be centred and expressed in Him. He is seen to contain the revelation of God under the terms and forms of human life and character.

The following is an account by the wife of Jonathan

¹*Horace Bushnell*. By Theodore T. Munger. Pp. 113, 114.

Edwards of an experience which is evidently analogous to Bushnell's:

“‘Last night,’ Mrs. Edwards writes, ‘was the sweetest night I ever had in my life. I never before, for so long a time together, enjoyed so much of the light and rest and sweetness of heaven in my soul, but without the least agitation of body during the whole time. Part of the night I lay awake, sometimes asleep, and sometimes between sleeping and waking. But all night I continued in a constant, clear, and lively sense of the heavenly sweetness of Christ’s excellent love, of His nearness to me, and of my dearness to Him; with an inexpressibly sweet calmness of soul in an entire rest in Him. I seemed to myself to perceive a glow of divine love come down from the heart of Christ in heaven into my heart in a constant stream, like a stream or pencil of sweet light. At the same time my heart and soul all flowed out in love to Christ, so that there seemed to be a constant flowing and reflowing of heavenly love, and I appeared to myself to float or swim in these bright, sweet beams, like the motes swimming in the beams of the sun, or the streams of His light which come in at the window. I think that what I felt each minute was worth more than all the outward comfort and pleasure which I had enjoyed in my whole life put together. It was pleasure, without the least sting, or any interruption. It was a sweetness which my soul was lost in; it seemed to be all that my feeble frame could sustain. There was but little difference whether I was asleep or awake, but if there was any difference, the sweetness was greatest while I was asleep. As I awoke early the next morning, it seemed

to me that I had entirely done with myself. I felt that the opinions of the world concerning me were nothing, and that I had no more to do with any outward interest of my own than with that of a person whom I never saw. The glory of God seemed to swallow up every wish and desire of my heart. . . . After retiring to rest and sleeping a little while, I awoke, and was led to reflect on God's mercy to me, in giving me, for many years, a willingness to die ; and after that, in making me willing to live, that I might do and suffer whatever He called me to here. I also thought how God had graciously given me an entire resignation to His will, with respect to the kind and manner of death that I should die ; having been made willing to die on the rack, or at the stake, and, if it were God's will, to die in darkness. But now it occurred to me, I used to think of living no longer than to the ordinary age of man. Upon this I was led to ask myself, whether I was not willing to be kept out of heaven even longer ; and my whole heart seemed immediately to reply, Yes, a thousand years, and a thousand in horror, if it be most for the honour of God, the torment of my body being so great, awful, and overwhelming that none could bear to live in the country where the spectacle was seen, and the torment of my mind being vastly greater. And it seemed to me that I found a perfect willingness, quietness, and alacrity of soul in consenting that it should be so, if it were most for the glory of God, so that there was no hesitation, doubt, or darkness in my mind. The glory of God seemed to overcome me and swallow me up, and every conceivable suffering, and everything that

was terrible to my nature, seemed to shrink to nothing before it. This resignation continued in its clearness and brightness for the rest of the night, and all the next day and the following night, and on Monday in the forenoon, without interruption or abatement.'"¹

Similar experiences might be quoted from Madame Guyon² and Santa Teresa. Madame Guyon speaks of God so loving her that He seemed to pervade her whole being even in her sleep. There are few of the special features of her experience which are not implied in the foregoing account by Mrs. Edwards, and it is better to take illustrations from the more matter-of-fact Anglo-Saxon temperament.

When we turn to the more normal forms of this experience, we find that they differ chiefly from the extraordinary forms, in that the experience deepens gradually in intensity and is more constant when it has once come into the life. It is important to notice that, when the experience deepens gradually, it is not necessarily less in intensity. Dr. Dale, for instance, whose experience had not been abnormal in its abruptness, knows its intensity perfectly well. He writes in February, 1892:

"When my son came from Cambridge, and my daughter from Birmingham, and when I learned that Sir Andrew Clarke had been telegraphed for, of course I knew what it all meant. It did not seem at all terrible. I knew God was with me, as a blind child might know that its mother was in the room; and this gave perfect

¹ *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. By William James. LL.D., etc. Pp. 276-278.

² Cf. Madame Guyon's *Method of Prayer*.

peace ; but I was not strong enough to bear any vivid sense of His presence. When, at my request, my son read me a verse or two of the first chapter of Ephesians, the wonder of it was too much for me ; I was obliged to ask him to stop."

So also Bunyan, who arrived at his port of peace through very stormy waters, says :

"I had two or three times, at or about my deliverance from this temptation, such strange apprehensions of the grace of God that I could hardly bear up under them, it was so out of measure amazing when I thought it could reach me. I do think, if that sense of it had abode long upon me, it would have made me incapable for business."

A most remarkable instance on record of the abiding and constant sense of the presence of God, is the well-known case of Brother Lawrence. The consciousness of God is not here differentiated from the consciousness of Christ, but it is clearly a consciousness of God as revealed in Christ—these being in Brother Lawrence's mind practically identical and indistinguishable. It has the interest of being recorded by himself and his friends as an isolated and original fact ; none of them having heard of anything like it, and all of them being arrested by an experience which appeared to conflict with all preconceived expectations. Brother Lawrence was a soldier and footman named Nicholas Herman of Loraine, who, having made up his mind to "seek religion," was admitted a lay-brother among the barefooted Carmelites at Paris in 1666. We have fortunately his own account of himself, and the account of certain conversations with

him recorded by others in which his experience had been under discussion ; and the consensus of testimony goes a long way to produce conviction as to the genuineness of the man, and of the experience to which he bears witness. Here is one of his own letters giving an account of himself :

“ Since you desire so earnestly that I should communicate to you the method by which I arrived at that *habitual sense of God's Presence*, which our Lord, of His mercy, has been pleased to vouchsafe to me ; I must tell you, that it is with great difficulty that I am prevailed on by your importunities ; and now I do it only upon the terms, that you show my letter to nobody. If I knew that you would let it be seen, all the desire that I have for your advancement would not be able to determine me to it. The account I can give you is :

“ Having found in many books different methods of going to God, and divers practices of the spiritual life, I thought this would serve rather to puzzle me, than facilitate what I sought after, which was nothing but how to become wholly God's. This made me resolve to give the all for the all : so after having given myself wholly to God, to make all the satisfaction I could for my sins, *I renounced, for the love of Him everything that was not He ; and I began to live as if there was none but He and I in the world.* Sometimes I considered myself before Him as a poor criminal at the feet of his judge ; at other times I beheld Him in my heart as my *Father*, as my *God*. I worshipped Him the oftenest that I could, keeping my mind in His holy *Presence*, and recalling it as often as I

found it wandered from Him. I found no small pain in this exercise, and yet I continued it, notwithstanding all the difficulties that occurred, without troubling or disquieting myself when my mind had wandered involuntarily. I made this my business, as much all the day long as at the appointed times of prayer ; for at all times, every hour, every minute, even in the height of my business, I drove away from my mind everything that was capable of interrupting my thought of God.

“Such has been my common practice ever since I entered into religion ; and though I have done it very imperfectly, yet I have found great advantages by it. These I well know, are to be imputed to the mere mercy and goodness of God, because we can do nothing without Him ; and *I* still less than any.”¹

The following is from the record of his conversations transcribed by an inquirer :

“He said that in the beginning of his noviciate, he spent the hours appointed for private prayer in thinking of God, so as to convince his mind of, and to impress deeply upon his heart, the Divine existence, rather by devout sentiments, and submission to the lights of faith, than by studied reasonings and elaborate meditations. That by this short and sure method, he exercised himself in the knowledge and love of God, resolving to use his utmost endeavour to live in a continual sense of His Presence, and, if possible, never to forget Him more.

“He said that when he had thus in prayer filled his mind with great sentiments of that infinite Being, he went to his work appointed in the kitchen (for he was

¹ *The Practice of the Presence of God*, pp. 27-29.

cook to the society) ; there having first considered severally the things his office required, and when and how each thing was to be done, he spent all the intervals of his time, as well before as after his work, in prayer.

“He said that when he began his business he said to God, with a filial trust in Him, ‘O my God, since Thou art with me, and I must now, in obedience to Thy commands, apply my mind to these outward things, I beseech Thee to grant me the grace to continue in Thy Presence ; and to this end do Thou prosper me with Thy assistance, receive all my works, and possess all my affections.’

“As he proceeded in his work, he continued his familiar conversation with his Maker, imploring His grace, and offering to Him all his actions.

“When he had finished, he examined himself how he had discharged his duty ; if he found *well*, he returned thanks to God ; if otherwise, he asked pardon ; and without being discouraged, he set his mind right again, and continued his exercise of the *presence of God*, as if he had never deviated from it. ‘Thus,’ said he, ‘by rising after my falls, and by frequently renewed acts of faith and love, I am come to a state, wherein it would be as difficult for me not to think of God, as it was at first to accustom myself to it.’

“As Brother Lawrence had found such an advantage in walking in the presence of God, it was natural for him to recommend it earnestly to others ; but his example was a stronger inducement than any arguments he could propose. His very countenance was edifying ; such a sweet and calm devotion appearing in it, as could not but affect the beholders. And it was observed that in the greatest hurry

of business in the kitchen he still preserved his recollection and heavenly-mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each thing in its season, with an even uninterrupted composure and tranquillity of spirit. 'The time of business,' said he, 'does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament.'"¹

Some of the facts which he mentions seem so much at variance with the system under which he lived, that they compel one to regard them as first-hand experiences:

"He told me that the *foundation of the spiritual life in him* had been a high notion and esteem of God in faith; which when he had once well conceived, he had no other care at first but faithfully to reject every other thought, *that he might perform all his actions for the love of God*. That when sometimes he had not thought of God for a good while, he did not disquiet himself for it; but after having acknowledged his wretchedness to God, he returned to Him with so much the greater trust in Him, by how much he found himself more wretched to have forgot Him.

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"When outward business diverted him a little from the thought of God, a fresh remembrance coming from God invested his soul, and so inflamed and transported him that it was difficult for him to contain himself.

¹ *The Practice of the Presence of God*, pp. 24-26.

“He said that he was more united to God in his outward employments than when he left them for devotion in retirement.

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“He said that our sanctification did not depend upon changing our works, but in doing that for God’s sake, which we commonly do for our own. That it was lamentable to see how many people mistook the means for the end, addicting themselves to certain works, which they performed very imperfectly, by reason of their human or selfish regards.

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“He said that his prayer was nothing else but a sense of the presence of God, his soul being at that time insensible to everything but Divine love; and that when the appointed times of prayer were past, he found no difference, because he still continued with God, praising and blessing Him with all his might, so that he passed his life in continual joy; yet hoped that God would give him somewhat to suffer when he should grow stronger.

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“He said that the whole substance of religion was faith, hope, and charity; by the practice of which we become united to the will of God: that all beside is indifferent and to be used as a means, that we may arrive at our end, and be swallowed up therein, by faith and charity.

“He said that all things are possible to him who *believes*, that they are less difficult to him who *hopes*, they are more easy to him who *loves*, and still more easy to

him who perseveres in the practice of these three virtues.

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“I have quitted all forms of devotion and set prayers but those to which my state obliges me. And I make it my business only to persevere in His holy presence, wherein I keep myself by a simple attention and a general fond regard to God, which I may call *an actual presence of God*; or, to speak better, an habitual, silent, and secret conversation of the soul with God, which often causes in me joys and raptures inwardly, and sometimes also outwardly, so great that I am forced to use means to moderate them and prevent their appearance to others.”¹

The most impressive and the most fruitful of all these experiences is, of course, S. Paul's on the road to Damascus (Acts ix.; xxii. 10; xxvi. 13-15). The overwhelming light, the consequent blindness, the sudden revelation to Paul himself of thoughts and feelings and ideas which had been accumulating subconsciously in the back of his mind; the cleaving asunder as it were of the spirit of the man, so that he seemed to stand apart from himself, are all of them characteristic features of the spiritual experience connected with the sudden realisation of the presence of God.

The record of such experiences as these illustrates a type of experience which is much less developed and much more general. There are comparatively few lives in which there is not a sense of the presence of God which deepens and intensifies towards the end of life.

¹ *The Practice of the Presence of God*, pp. 16-33.

The belief in God's providential guidance, which "arises not from the study of the fortunes of others, but in each case the study of our own fortunes and experience,"¹ is much less the feeling that He has guided the external events of our life, than that, through those events, He has been guiding us to a knowledge of Himself and giving us the victory which overcomes the world. There is a special providence in the life of every man; but it is the providence intended to fulfil the will of God that "all men should be saved, and should come to a knowledge of His truth." There are moments in the life of all men whose hearts are set upon spiritual things, when "a conjunction of circumstances which has no special meaning to others seems to whisper a message in our private ear. It is to us in that moment as though nature had broken her long habit of silence, and told our heart that we are known and cared for and loved."

There is no greater blessing given to human life than that it should be surrounded by witnesses to the benign influences of the Spirit, which may steal gently in and sink none the less deeply into character because they are almost unheeded. This is certainly one of the benefits which the Christian Church as a communion of saints, and all the organisations which spring out of it, is intended to secure for the world. Their essential value is measured by the degree in which they bring those who are under their influence into the presence of the spiritual God, and make them feel that His life interpenetrates, quickens, vitalises, purifies the whole life of man. That they do not altogether fail is indicated by the large

¹ Ritschl.

number of men and women who, in dim and half-conscious ways, become obedient to the heavenly vision, owning the influences of the spirit and gladdened by His presence even when they cannot give an account to their critics of the reasons for what they do.

NOTE C.

§ ON THE MEANING OF THE WORD "SPIRIT."

All religious experience rests on the fact that man finds in himself a spiritual order of being, and recognises outside of him, objectively, manifestations of the same order. When, for instance, we are moved by the presence of some majestic scene in nature, by the beauty of the hills and woods, or the mystery and enchantment of the sea, the mind within supplies us with the word which explains, not the scene, but the sense of emotion in its presence. Deep answers to deep, and we say :

" I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
A motion and a *spirit*, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

We explain the elevation which we feel, as the result of the presence in the scene of something which we had

already found in ourselves. In moments of inspiration we leap to the certain conviction that the nature outside contains the impress of the presence of spirit. We may compare this description of "Spirit" with the *Wisdom of Solomon* :

- "For there is in her a spirit quick of understanding,
 holy,
 Alone in kind, manifold,
 Subtil, freely moving,
 Clear in utterance, unpolluted,
 Distinct, unharmed,
 Loving what is good, keen, unhindered,
23. Beneficent, loving toward man,
 Stedfast, sure, free from care,
 All-powerful, all-surveying,
 And penetrating through all spirits
 That are quick of understanding, pure, most subtil :
24. For wisdom is more mobile than any motion ;
 Yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason
 of her pureness.
25. For she is a breath of the power of God,
 And a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty ;
 Therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her.
26. For she is an effluence from everlasting light,
 And an unspotted mirror of the working of God,
 And an image of his goodness.
27. And she, being one, hath power to do all things ;
 And from generation to generation passing into holy
 souls
 She maketh *men* friends of God and prophets."

It is not too much to say that, to those who have been accustomed to live in the prison-house constructed by the

psychology which assumes that all truth comes through the senses, or the philosophy which finds that all truth is acquired by a dialectical process, the re-discovery of atrophied powers of the soul, giving access to an immediate fellowship with the Eternal Spirit and an interpretation of the world through the spirit is like Christian's discovery of the key of promise. Many of those who have maintained most rigorously the inspiration of the Hebrew scriptures, have been content to exclude present-day humanity from conscious fellowship with the Unseen. If we can venture to anticipate as a kind of crown of modern research and ancient lore, that science may be led to admit that both in the human soul and in the cosmos, there are powers which make it possible that the mind may be quickened to a conscious fellowship with God who is Spirit, some of us will break out like Christian into passionate speech :

“‘What a fool,’ quoth he, ‘am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty ! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.’ Then said Hopeful, ‘That is good news, good brother ; pluck it out of thy bosom, and try.’ Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon door, whose bolt (as he turned the key) gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and Christian and Hopeful came out.”

NOTE D.

NOTE ON RUDOLF EUCKEN'S WORK ON THE RELATIONS
OF RELIGION AND HISTORY.

Rudolf Eucken's work in Europe at the present time has opened the door of the prison-house to many who thought themselves shut in by a crass materialism. It is not final, but it is a beginning. It opens doors, and those who pass through them into an appreciation of the spiritual universe find themselves in a large place.

Eucken has put a great deal of meaning into the phrase, "spiritual life," which constantly recurs in his writings. *spiritual life* It means for him the whole effort and attainment of that *striving as we find in Eucken* amazing living, believing, hoping, striving, suffering, sacrificing, achieving power, which we know as the spirit of man. It is the image of God in man, the divine power which God has given to man, and which man shares with God. Eucken's problem may be defined as that of interpreting the Christian religion in a way big enough to be in harmony with every worthy effort of that spirit.

By "culture" Eucken means all that the best German writers include under that word. It does not stand for the narrow affectation of a circle, or the enthusiasm of a university clique, as it often has done in England, but for the whole organised intellectual product of an age. It differs from religion as the mind differs from the soul. Attempts have been made both in England and in Germany to make religion a department of culture, and to set religion in opposition to culture. Eucken

recognises that both efforts are mistaken. Religion is the inclusive thing, and just because it is so vastly comprehensive it may be distinguished from culture but not opposed to it.

Religion

Another word which occurs with an un-English con- (C) notation is the expression, "positive religion." The word "positive" is a stronger rendering of our word "definite." It differentiates between a general religious-ness, or a philosophic faith in God, and a religion in which Divine action takes place at some definite point in time with definable consequences and results in human history. There is a new and powerful school of teachers in Germany known as the "positive moderne."

positive

In his book on the central problem of religion and philosophy he begins with a rapid sketch of the rise and apparent results of the historical method, stating them negatively first, in order to convert the negation into a new affirmation on a strong and indisputable basis. His argument may be summarised. Nothing is so characteristic of the nineteenth century as the development of the historical conception and treatment. If the eighteenth century is called the century of philosophy the nineteenth will be called the historical century. It has brought us into a different relation to truth, and has radically altered our world by looking on the rise of life as the result of a long process, and learning to value the present as a link in a continuous chain. The introduction of the new method was bound to mean an upheaval in the whole sphere of life, thought, and action. It brought with it a broader basis, a stronger movement, a measureless wealth of individual culture, a clearer vision, a calmer

character

19th Century

hour

judgment, a closer connection between all stages of life, and a stimulus to take possession of threads which have been handed over to us from the past and to carry them through with all our might; it brought a call to spontaneous co-operation in the great work of the universe.

Religion could not escape its share in this transformation, and Christianity, owing to its historical roots, was bound to feel the shock severely. In Christian history religion had appeared to come to us from a height which towered far above all human power and action. A wonderful deed, a manifestation of God, had placed this height in human history. All change, chance, in human affairs could not affect it in the slightest. The only problem was to maintain what was won on this height in its unadulterated form and keep it ever present to all ages.

The historical method challenged this conviction severely. It carried its conviction of the close connection of events to that height of heights, it examined its surroundings, and showed that it too was not lacking in connecting links. It reduced the intervals more and more, till at last the highest appears as the summit of a movement, beginning in a remote past, and so much a piece of a great whole that it can only disclose its essential meaning in cohesion. If the historical method can take in the Christian facts as well as all other historical facts, our conception of the propelling forces must become different. The sharp contrast between human and divine disappears. The human is called in to help in what we recognise as a divine process, and it has received an inward elevation, through the partnership. The divine gains a greater psychical proximity and

familiarity. There is more inward unity in life and a broader basis for religion.

The historical method brings a corresponding change in the relations of religions to one another. The heterogeneity of each particular religion has to be understood in the light of the homogeneity of the religious impulse which lies behind all religion. Every special form has some reason behind it. The severity of an absolute view yields to the geniality of a relative one. Every religion is seen to have some value. If knowledge were our only interest this would be clear gain. But it appears doubtful whether the gain to knowledge is not a loss to religion. Science seeks to bring all diversity into a continuous coherence, but religion is not possible without a contrast, and a clear separation of the human and divine.

Historical criticism throwing its light on persons and precedents appears to destroy in them especially what makes them objects of religious veneration—the unique, the pre-eminent, the miraculous. Our greatest poet was right in calling the miraculous the dearest child of faith. Religion stripped of all miracle is a contradiction in itself. The only question is what comes under that category. But the exact sciences do not tolerate miracles in any sense.

Eucken then brings us to face the need of finding a new standpoint, from which to view the sacred history. This is necessary because: (1) We must differentiate between the facts and the supernatural sublimity which faith has added to them. (2) Under the searchlight of criticism many facts have forfeited the directness and meaning which appeared to belong to them. (3) It is

not satisfactory that religion should rest on an involved intellectual process, and that we must pass through grave doubts and hesitations before we obtain it again, making something of it which it previously was not. (4) The new method has brought divine and human close together, and the next step on that road is when the human draws everything to itself which formerly seemed the effect of the divine. Our Religion would then become a mere part of a general life of culture, when every pre-eminent height is lost in the record of its genesis and progress. (5) The argument that the religion of an epoch must grow out of the movement of an epoch, not from a dead past, but from a living present, does not really help. Religion as a mere product of an age is not able to control any age. With the sacrifice of the idea of eternal truth, and a full surrender to the conditions of a time, religion will become a semblance and a shadow. (6) The historical treatment with its relativism forces the ultimate question forward—Is religion as a whole a play of phenomena, an historical category, a phase of evolution through which humanity must pass, but through which it has finally passed? Although only an extreme section of Positivists have got so far as this, the influence of their ideas reaches far into human life, and this relativism is far more dangerous to religion than the method of the eighteenth century attack which tried to explain religion as an invention of the priests.

Eucken has seen the worst and looked it severely in the face. It is interesting to note how he reaches his reconstruction, and for those who have been with him down

into the depths there may be some profit in noting the steps by which he ascends.

His first point is the one popularised in this country by Mr. Balfour in his *Foundations of Belief*—that religion and life are in the same boat. If there is nothing but a stream of existence and no *terra firma*, life, knowledge, science itself, are all on the stream. We must get standing ground somehow, unless we are to be carried into the abyss of nullity in which existence is swallowed up as in Hindoo metaphysics. When we are confronted with the monstrous conclusion that makes men

“the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
And weave their petty cells and die,”

then the mind revolts and becomes most certain that everything is not afloat on the stream: for the outstanding fact in history is that the strife for the eternal does turn itself into deed and performance. External historical facts and the history of supreme achievement in the spiritual order, mean two altogether different things. In nature the connection between events is outward and external, but in so far as man oversteps nature he becomes a real builder of a culture-kingdom which counteracts nature. There is no culture without an effort to hold fast by certain models, deeds and personalities; without taking up the battle against the merely transitory.

Even though this is limited to a transmission of single wonderful events the product becomes inward life, religion, conceptions of right and the like, made secure under the form of morals; a link binding periods to one

another is gained, life hangs less and less on the moment ; the present absorbs more and more of the past and outgrows the changing wishes and caprices of the day. The analytical and critical method of history which seemed so fatal now comes to our aid. It enables us to discriminate between the specific character of a spiritual truth or a spiritual effort after truth, and the specific character of a historical people. This is most manifest when the truth becomes universal and spreads itself over the whole of humanity. The deciphering of enigmatical monuments and obscure documents, makes it clear that all the movement of time has left human thought and feeling and effort unchanged in character, however altered in form. The human element is constant. But we go to history not merely to understand this, but to win something for our own lives from the zenith of its productivity. We are convinced that at each such zenith, something of abiding worth broke upon the world, something which we ourselves are not able to produce, but which can be conveyed to us. It is for this we study the zenith of Greek culture, the beginnings of Christianity and the rise of the modern period. We do so with the conviction that they not only belong to their own epoch, but that something which stands above all time is at work, and that this can be conveyed to all generations. In this way history becomes a victory over mere time, an effort to build up a realm of truth out of the strife and troubles of time ; as we separate transitional from permanent, decaying from everlasting, it becomes an endeavour to build up our lives into a realm of truth, or fasten them to it as to a set star.

The value of this truth-above-time is seen when a new self-sustaining kind of life is recognised within it. The spiritual life of the individual becomes independent of and victorious over time. Short of that it sinks to a mere means of satisfying human needs ; with it, it can hold out characteristic aims and with characteristic strength work for the elevation of man from within.

We may understand many different things by the words "true" and "good," but all striving after what they mean implies that they are representatives of a new timeless order of things. As one conceives the life of the spirit as a whole, and looks upon it as a new stage of reality, it becomes clear that a self-sustained realm of everlasting truth opposes the change and chances of time and gives to human life a sure foundation.

The position of man in history is that he has to strive for his footing in the everlasting order on which his existence must ultimately be founded. Truth discloses its content through effort, toil, and experience of history. The fundamental fact in history has to be won from history, and when it is won it discloses the eternal in history. As compared with this the rise and fall of nations, the most outstanding narrative of events, is not worth calling history. Real history begins when we escape from what is merely temporal and penetrating to a depth where an inward communion of life is able to grow in spite of all the differences of time.

When we do this we have a double advantage. We avoid (1) the old method of making all spiritual truth depend on a single point of history, and (2) the new method of concentrating attention on an endless and

unmeaning flux of events. Time and Eternity both get their rights. Liberty and truth are no longer at variance; they are bound together, each assisting the other. If a spiritual kind of history requires an eternal truth for its own foundation and maintenance, then religion and history can cultivate a more friendly acquaintance than formerly.

Religion contains an exaltation over time as well as a descent into it. The fundamental truth with which it stands or falls is that the Divine, without tarnishing its state, is present within the temporal and human existence. The more surpassing and sublime the Divine appears the more is an exaltation of man required, and as social experience increases the more necessary is it to hold up conspicuously the eternal truth, and show how it is carried out in the work of history. The eternal cannot work upon man without entering into historical forms of existence. In doing so it accepts an historical moment, and participates in the accidents of that moment.

This is the basis of Eucken's reconstruction—coming to historic Christianity with his philosophic background he sees three factors :

(a) (1) A Personality who has unique importance and lasting worth. At a time of strife and decadence Jesus lives in a world which He brings with Him of deep peace and pure innocence.

(b) (2) In standing by the fixed point given by this Personality Christianity is not stationary. Its progress as well as its origin is under the guiding Spirit of God. It is progressive because the course of centuries brings new materials to the question of life and existence with which

religion is concerned. It is our task to use the new material in interpreting the old.

The present has always to rediscover the past, not imitate it, but possess and use it for its own purposes. It must always seek its relation to the past anew. The particular picture of the past, with all that seems precious in it, will fashion the present differently according to what its own conception of the past conceives as truth; then the movement of a period can always discover fresh things in the past, and awaken new things in it. This superior right of the present is terribly stunted by a merely historical method of thought. That merely historical method takes possession of minds the more readily because, without any effort on our part, spirit and reason seem to flow to us out of history. This leads to a mere self-complaisance, to a passive retention; and we fall at last into the danger of losing purpose in our lives and becoming the dumb lacqueys of other days. Precious as knowledge may be it is no more able now than it ever was to take the place of personal life. The overflowing profusion of that historical possession gives only a half, or sham, life instead of a full and genuine one, pictures instead of things, knowledge instead of conviction, a static condition instead of a personal life.

As the spiritual life attains its greatest force and distinctness at the point where it breaks through into history, it readily appears as if religion had only to adhere to this point and always to return to it as much as possible to save it from the inevitable human process of sinking. This gives the appearance of a ceaseless return to old truth, but in fact, *the course of centuries brings new material*

cf. *Soul
action*

} *to the questions of life and existence with which religion is concerned.* It then becomes necessary for us—taught by the historical method—to distinguish between the eternal and the historical, between substance and essence, in order not to avoid injuring the truth we wish to assert by amalgamating the human with the divine, and the temporal with the eternal. These considerations become more weighty when religion is put—as it must be—in close touch with the whole life of the spirit; and when as the effect of this spiritual life on men substantial advances in culture are recognised in the course of history.

If after the founding of a religion, substantial alteration takes place in the spiritual life of man, then it must be most harmful to religion to hold to the old form as unalterable and thereby bind the eternal—whose help we need—to a form which we must refuse. Such a binding of the eternal results in a narrowing of life, a suppression of conviction, an alienation from all that which should be most near to us. Religion lags more and more behind the active life of the human spirit, and at last when detached from it entirely, it readily appears as if it were a lower stage of life, which the movement of history has now left behind, as a mere work of man which is not able to maintain itself on the level of the spiritual life.

Since the beginning of Christianity powerful dislocations have in fact taken place. The development of modern culture has both dislocated much in particular events with which the foundations of Christianity was concerned, and it has also brought a complete change

in life and activity. The transformation concerns the world of thought. The last centuries have entirely altered the idea of the nature of the history of man himself, his intellectual and his spiritual history.

(3) Christianity is set into a profound and splendid theism. But the anthropomorphic and mythological method in which that theism was set forth under the old conditions make the old method too narrow and too small. The value of the indistinct pantheistic movements of to-day is that they correct this one-sidedness. The problem of the future is to keep the breadth and largeness of outlook given by these movements, and yet retain the full ethical value of Christianity. Yet this must be attempted if religion is to retain that sympathetic touch with human thought which it cannot do without. The need of the moment is for simplicity and concentration. If religion is to work mightily, and penetrate far, it must be possible for its truth to become the experience of anybody. It must on one hand embrace within its compass life in its furthest extent and its greatest contrasts, and on the other hand offer to men an innermost core of meaning which any one may experience, and which carries with it an interpretation of the deepest depths which life brings.

It is not enough to stir up a subjective emotion, to awaken a man to a greater warmth of disposition. It is not possible to arrive at a real activity without a transformation of the whole method. We stand in the presence of great problems of world-history whose final solution evades our vision, although even to be working at them brings religion into a better relation to the

need
moment

present position of the spiritual life of man in the world's history.

The prospect and outlook of the human race has changed between early Christian times and our own. Then it was a tired humanity which doubted its own powers, there was a yearning for a sure stay, not for a free movement, not for advance and effort, not for independence and individual responsibility, but for certainty and disburdenment, for rest and peace. The mere fact of having to meet such a longing was bound to give a special form to religion, to colour it with the sentiment of the time even while it opposed the time. Organisation and authority on one side, subordination and devotion on the other, a longing for a visible incorporation of unseen Truth, a joy in the marvellous, the incomprehensible, the magical, all combined to give an overwhelmingly passive character to religious life. We know how that has changed in modern times, how a fresh courage to live, a glad longing to work and create, to press forward and change, a longing for independence and self-responsibility has come over humanity. As a movement of this kind lays hold of life it will not leave the whole of religion unaffected. A conflict with the older form is then unavoidable. If religion binds its whole existence to that form it must share in the common catastrophe. The Reformation took up these problems but it did not carry them to a conclusion. It did open again the deep wells of life emotion, but in the development of its thought-world it has remained a good deal attached to the old form. Then with the modern revival of religious problems the

demand arises afresh, and in all churches is found the desire for more actuality and more development of power in religion. But it is not so easy to bring them about as it has appeared to many.

It is still to be demonstrated that Christianity can take into itself such a movement of the whole world's history, without forfeiting its hold of a truth which is above the changes which time brings. At the moment we have only to see to it that history should be conceived and treated in the same atmosphere as it was originally developed. If history is embedded in a super-historical background, we must use our own judgment in accepting and rejecting. We must establish an inward communion between the present and the past, and secure by our own thought the ground on which past and present can with fruitful results come into contact. We must exorcise all mere flight from the present into the past, and make it clear that we reverence the greatest in history, as in religion, not so much for its own sake as for the disclosure and presentment of eternal truth. The service of God must show itself as the service of man, even though we might have wished otherwise. The indispensable pre-supposition for all this is, however, a direct presence of eternal truth throughout the whole course of history, the possibility of our being grafted into the truth. That involves a decided break with the old method which acknowledged in one single point the whole fulness of Eternity, and limited all progress to holding fast to, and copying this supreme point. If we cling to that, a lessening of activity is inevitable. What has no need of our acts of will for its continuance and activity can never win

the whole power of our life. (Cf. S. Paul, "Work out your own salvation." Phil. ii. 12, 13.)

Eucken's synthesis is not final, nor adequate for the Christian mind, but these great merits may be claimed for it. (1) It recognises what philosophy commonly neglects, that the real purpose of a philosophic view of life can only be served if philosophy accepts history as a datum. A philosophy which would make the facts of history impossible is an impossible philosophy—it is no use to any one, and merely discredits the man who brings this pint-pot to hold the quart of historic happenings.

(2) The central interest of human history is the striving, endeavouring, battling, conquering, spirit of man, and especially the endeavour of that spirit to get a foothold in an eternal kingdom. Eucken recognises that this supreme mystery is the product of two powers, not one. It implies a dualism—God and man. Its meaning cannot be exhausted in the terms of one power.

(3) He allows room within the working of the Spirit of God for the interpreting spirit, as well as the creating act and the redeeming fact. The penetrating analysis of the facts of the life of Jesus Christ given us by S. Paul and S. John are, equally with the facts themselves, products of the Spirit that creates religion, and equally necessary in interpreting the inner meaning of the religious life. S. Paul's analysis of the Gospel history gives it to us as a theology of grace and a divine redemption from sin; and human need cannot do without that. S. John's interpretation corresponds even more closely with Eucken's suggestion in making

human
fibre.

the historic fact a presentment in history of the
Eternal.

I bought Eucken's book *Hauptprobleme des Religionsphilosophie der Gegenwart* in Germany in 1909, and am not aware whether any translation has been published in this country. Had I known of one I would have given a reference. I have here taken what seemed relevant from a translation made by Mr. E. E. Grimwade, B.A., out of a chapter of great interest.

D. M.

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